BEAL, (Mrs.) Mildred P.

APPROVED
(FINAL FORM)

SIS OK
(~~LACKS GWBrace sig.~~)

I

AM
1944
be

UNIVERSITAS BOSTONIENSIS
CONDITA MDCCCLXX

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THOMAS HARDY AND THE GENTEEL TRADITION

by

Mildred Price Beal

(A.B., Radcliffe College, 1920)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

1 9 4 4

AM
1944
be

Approved
by

First Reader. Gerald W. Brace
Professor of

Second Reader . . . Thomas R. Mather. . .
Professor of

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Boston Library Consortium Member Libraries

https://archive.org/details/thomashardygente00beal

Topical Outline

	Page
Introduction	1
I. Victorian Era	1
1. Emphasis on the three classes	1
a. Middle class imitates upper class.	
b. Patrons and patronesses	
2. Leading men of letters discuss problems	2-4
a. Ibsen, Trollope, Dickens, Scott, Butler, Eliot, and Gissing write of poverty and seduction.	
b. Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter."	
c. Hardy's new elements in theme.	
1. Victorian style and technique	
2. Continental Influences	
3. Reade and Wilkie Collins	
3. Modern critics and the Victorian tradition.	
a. George Santayana	
b. Transition of Victorian tradition to Humanism	
4. Virtue in Hardy's victims of poverty and circumstance	6-8
a. Hardy's philosophy	
b. Class barriers	6,7

Topical Outline (continued)

	Page
c. Defeatism in attaining intellectual desires.	
d. "Immanent Will" or chance.	
e. Decline of Hardy's ancestral line.	
Chapter I THOMAS HARDY	9
1. Decline of family	9
2. Early education	9,10
3. Family traditions	11,12
4. Apprenticeship to an architect	12-16
a. Influences	
1. Fellow-workers	14
2. Friends	15,16
3. Church	15,16
4. Greek	16
5. Darwin	16
5. Hardy goes to London.	16-21
a. Influences.	
1. Blomfield	17
2. London and rural dialect	17
3. John Stuart Mill	17

Topical Outline (continued)

	Page
4. Art	18,19
5. Poets	19
6. Restoration work	19
7. Classes at King's College	19
6. Retired to country life	20
a. Acceptance of genteel tradition	
1. Philosophy	21
Chapter II HARDY'S LITERARY CAREER	22
1. "The Poor Man and the Lady"	22,23
2. "Desperate Remedies"	23,24
3. "Under the Greenwood Tree"	25-29
4. "A Pair of Blue Eyes"	29-34
5. "Far from the Madding Crowd"	34-36
6. "The Woodlanders"	36,37
7. "The Hand of Ethelberta"	37,38
8. "The Return of the Native"	39-43
9. "An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress"	43-45
10. "Short Stories"	46-48
Chapter III FURTHER STORIES FOR GENTEEL READERS	49
1."The Trumpet-Major"	49-53
2. "A Laodicean"	51,52
3. Play written, based on "Far from the Madding Crowd"	53-64

Topical Outline (continued)

	Page
4. "Two on a Tower"	54,55
5. "The Mayor of Casterbridge"	55-57
6. 'Max Gate	57,58
7. "The Woodlanders"	58-61
8. "Tess of the D'Urbervilles"	62-69
9. "The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved"	70
10. Short Stories	71
11. "Jude the Obscure"	71-79
CONCLUSION	80
I. Strength of Victorian tradition	80
1. Hardy's married life	80-83
2. Summary of novels	83-87
a. Class barriers in novels.	
b. Intellectual and spiritual frustrations in novels	
c. Transition from external aristocracy of society to internal aristocracy of the intellect.	
3. Antithesis of Hardy's own life	88-90
a. Economic problems lightened.	
b. Honors heaped upon Hardy.	

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hardy's position as an English novelist in the later part of the nineteenth century places him in the Victorian era. This period of history, which was remarkable for the careful observance of convention under Queen Victoria's watchful eye, placed the emphasis on social standing and position according to the genteel tradition. There were three classes in society, with subdivisions, and he who occupied the top rank had little to worry about except to maintain that enviable position.

The middle class, like monkey imitating master, imposed the same social obligations upon the lower class that were imposed upon them ; however, the second class was a little harsher in their treatment of the lowest class and a little more cruel in their snobbishness, because the second class was closer to the luckless third class, and therefore they understood these unfortunates better. Naturally, there were a few from both the two upper classes who felt compassionate toward the sufferings of the lowest, and they endeavored to do as much as they could to alleviate their conditions. Society called such people "patrons" or "patronesses" and looked upon their deeds as charitable.

Some few, gifted with the ability to write, put into

lectures, sermons, plays and novels the problems of these lower class unfortunates. Many writers satirized all three classes for the purpose of being clever. They adopted Oscar Wilde's epigrammatic drawing-room style, sacrificing truth for wit. The Scandinavian playwright, Ibsen, brought to England his plays of the serious problems of his people, and in "The Doll's House", "Ghosts", and "An Enemy of the People", taught the English people to face the truth about themselves. Later, Shaw took up the cudgel, and with sharp satire and stinging truth caused the English public embarrassment in broadcasting their weaknesses.

Charles Dickens had told tales of the lower classes of people in an entertaining way, and had awakened general interest in the lives of the poor. Hardy had frequented readings by Dickens, and read his works with curiosity. He remarked late in life to a caller :"Dickens was said to be too much of a caricaturist. I like Trollope. Thackeray was too much of a satirist. Trollope was . . . . a happy mean."1/

Hardy also thought that Dickens misrepresented women and that Ibsen tried too hard to be edifying.2/ Hardy believed that if he could emulate Dickens in portraying the difficulties of the lower classes, he would present a true picture of women; less flattering than the picture of the womenkind

1/ Mrs. Hardy, Early Life, p.70.

2/C.J.Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.102.

of Sir Walter Scott and Dickens,but a truer one. Butler and Gissing were writing about the bitter lot of the city poor , and were bringing a cold and cankerous reality to the literature of the day. Hardy's contributions to literature concerned themselves for the most part with the country poor. Butler published "Erewhon" in 1872, and was writing " The Way of All Flesh " in the 70's. This novel was not published until 1903 because of the representation it made of Butler's own family life. Possibly Butler took his title from the frequent references in the Bible to the perishability of all flesh, or he may have read Hardy's short story "The Three Strangers " 1/ and liked the reference, there, of the brown-ware vessel whose edge had been worn away by lips that had gone the way of all flesh.

George Gissing published his first novel " Workers in the Dawn " in 1880, and "New Grub Street "came out in 1891. By this time most of Hardy's books had been published, except " Jude the Obscure," "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," and " The Well-Beloved," which came out after 1891.

All three, Hardy, Gissing, and Butler, owed to French realism (Sand and Rochefoucauld2/) as well as to Ibsen and their English predecessors, a debt, involving the use of free discussion of the problems of poverty and morality.

1/ Thomas Hardy, Wessex Tales, p. 37.

2/C.J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex , p. 245.

While poverty had been dealt with by other novelists of the day, morality was a subject but lightly touched upon. Trollope George Eliot, Dickens, Scott, and the American author, Hawthorne, wrote touchingly about the problems of seduction. The victims in all the novels but one by these authors occupied minor roles and were offset by the noble characters of the heroines. The one exception was the American novel, "The Scarlet Letter" by Hawthorne. He had moved up to first place of importance the girl victim. In England, Hardy was one of the first novelists to do this, and his heroines became interesting but ordinary human beings subject to the temptations of the flesh. Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell's "RUTH", first published in 1853, was predecessor to Hardy's Tess. Ruth's seduction by Bellingham and subsequent desertion by him parallels Tess' and Alec's tragic affair, although Tess's baby died, while Ruth's child lived.[1/] Both Tess and Ruth died, although Ruth embraced religion before the end of her life, while Tess repudiated it.

Although Hardy was introducing new elements in his theme, he clung to Victorian technique and style. His teachers in this were Reade and Wilkie Collins, popular novelists of the day, who used melodramatic tricks of technique to please their genteel readers. Victorian tradition loved melodrama, since it was a sort of compensation for a restricted moral life. Melodrama was also an escape from

---

1/ Elizabeth C. Gaskell, Ruth. Henry Frowde, London; Oxford Press 1853.

reality for the genteel public who liked the absurd surprises and impossible situations which novelists and playwrights conceived. Hardy made use of these tricks of coincidence and unusual complications in all his novels, although his later books became more real and the trumped-up situations less obvious.

Novelists of today scorn such mechanized devices as being unworthy of literature, unless the story or play is frankly a melodrama, such as "The Bat", "The Cat and the Canary," or "Arsenic and Old Lace." Victorian literature had to be crowded with surprises, and Hardy understood this.

Modern critics believe that the Victorian tradition has passed away. George Santayana thinks that it has simply changed into a humanism whose principles are classic. The genteel tradition loved its Greek and Latin [1] he says, and was composed of "learned men, who, without quarelling with Christian dogma, treated it humanly, and, partly by tolerance and partly by ridicule, hoped to neutralize all its metaphysical and moral rigour."

Santayana goes on to say that they believed in "the natural goodness of mankind, a goodness humanized by frank sensuality and a wink at all amiable vices; their truly ardent morality was all negative." This laissez-faire attitude may have been true of the greater part of Victorianism, but it was left to writers such as Hardy to attempt to

1/ George Santayana, The Genteel Tradition at Bay, New York: Scribner's, 1931. Pp.4-5.

change the English thought from their lukewarm sensibilities concerning their responsibilities toward moral problems. The reading public which belonged to the higher classes not only "winked" at vices; many of them did not know that such degradation and poverty existed. They did not know or care that poverty is accompanied by a want of firmness in morals. The swing away from the Victorian standards of noble womanhood toward a literature meeting reality had begun.

The virtues of characters such as Gabriel Oak in "Far from the Madding Crowd" and the reddleman, Diggory Venn, in "The Return of the Native" were repeated in poor Tess in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles"; but Tess was shown all too well as the victim of poverty and circumstance, and her misadventures did not deprive her of the author's right to call her "a pure woman."

Hardy's philosophy is on the pessimistic side, and whether mankind's misfortunes are due to destiny or chance, or an "Immanent Will", as Schopenhauer calls it, Hardy felt that death ended one's whole existence, despite his interest in church music and his attendance at church services.[1/] The misfortunes of his characters arose from their efforts to break away from the conditions by which they were surrounded, contrary to the destiny from which they sprung. The efforts of an individual to attain love or distinction apart from the class to which he was born, bring only misery; these are the

---

1/ C.J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.163.

themes upon which Hardy works. The impossibility of gaining any human desire is a basis for some of the ideas in his novels. These are the themes of "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" and "Jude the Obscure."

These ideas were not new to the Victorians, since they had read Plato and Schopenhauer, and one of the profound thinkers of the time, John Stuart Mill, had published a treatise, "On Liberty", which was well-known to every student. It was an innovation to Hardy to introduce a subject concerning the free-will in a novel, and Hardy did not try it until he was well established as a novelist. The undercurrent of thought dealt with the barriers imposed upon a free will in Hardy's earlier novels, but the Victorian technique involving melodramatic suspense and surprise was followed.

In "The Return of the Native", Hardy mentions the "Immanent Will" by having Bathsheba refer to it as the "Prince of Darkness." After Mrs. Wildeve's death from the sting of an adder, but mostly from a broken heart, Eustacia thinks over the situation. "Yet, instead of blaming herself, she laid the fault upon the shoulders of some indistinct, colossal Prince of the World who had framed her situation and had ruled her lot." 1/

We note here that Hardy made a concession to Victorian thinking by adding "instead of blaming herself." It was too

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native, p.343.

soon (1878) to bring out in full the whole of Hardy's pessimistic thinking, and the criticism of Bathsheba's neglect to blame herself was the customary Victorian reaction.

In "Far from the Madding Crowd", the fault was placed upon "a series of actions done as by one in an extravagant dream." 1/ The misfortunes of Oak were also ascribed to "Gabriel's malignant star." 2/

In Hardy's own life the "Immanent Will" had influenced his thought, making him feel that a barrier was imposed between himself and a more fortunate upper class. Hardy's family had slipped from the upper class to a lower middle class, and the knowledge of this was galling to a sensitive and ambitious man. His marriage to the daughter of a solicitor, while his own father was a mason by trade, did not serve to lighten the feeling of inferiority which Hardy had. Although great honor came to Hardy later in life, he continued to be modest and retiring, self-depreciative and introspective.

1/ Thomas Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd, p.347

2/ Idem, p.389.

CHAPTER I

THOMAS HARDY

Thomas Hardy came from a humble but comfortable English household in a remote spot in Dorsetshire. He was born in a brick house with a thatched roof on the edge of Egdon Heath, a desolate place with tragical possibilities. Hardy was ever sensitive to the suggestion that his thatched-roof birth-place was a "cottage," and he considered the Hardy family as having declined from a more worthy landed proprietorship. He may have had his own family line in mind when he wrote of the degeneration of the Durbeyfield family in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," for he wrote in his Journal regarding"the decline and fall of the Hardys...." 1/ "So we go down,down,down." His obscurity of birth placed him in a different social category from that in which his first wife was born, for she was the daughter of a Plymouth solicitor, while Hardy's father was a mason or builder. The social distinction there is the difference between a trade and a profession. Hardy's parents realized their social position, and,like all parents, hoped for something better for their son.

Mrs.Hardy instructed her son religiously, for from birth

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.7.

Thomas was delicate, and it was not until he was eight years old that she felt that he was strong enough to walk three miles from their home in Upper Bockhampton, to a day school in Dorchester conducted by Isaac G. Last. In 1849 he started to this school and walked the six miles daily for the next seven years. He studied Latin and attempted to teach himself German. When he was fifteen, private lessons in French were added. It appears that although a thatched roof may be the outward symbol of a certain class in society, the intellect of the dwellers within was not limited by any such distinction.

Church services which Hardy attended at Stinsford regularly, resulted in Hardy's learning the ritual by heart. Both his father and mother encouraged him to play the violin, and they had gatherings in their home with music from bass viols, flutes and fiddles. Occasionally the Hardys went to Dorchester to St.Peter's Church, and Hardy's grandfather played the 'cello in the "quire" at Puddleton Church.[1]

The Hardys led a semi-genteel life in the home, rougher and more peasant when associating with the people of the hamlet. The children thought Thomas "stuck-up and queer." [2]

While Hardy felt keenly the degeneration of his line, he was proud of his ancestry, which was traceable to French stock,

---

1/ Clive Holland, Thomas Hardy, O.M. p.16.

2/ Idem.

landowners, who in the fifteenth century settled in the Channel Islands at Jersey, migrating from Normandy. One, Clement Le Hardi, married a sister of Sir William Lalogue. This Le Hardi retained the Norman coat of arms and founded the central line of the Jersey Le Hardis. A descendant of the same name offered hospitality to the Earl of Richmond against Richard the Third's orders. The Earl gave Le Hardi a ring as a token of favors to come. The words "Sic-donec," or "Thus-until," were engraved on the ring and became one of the mottoes of the Hardy family.

Henry, when he became King, made Le Hardi Lieutenant-Governor of the Island. A long succession of distinguished men followed- Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy, Nelson's Hardy; Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy, who was the Captain of Nelson's flagship, is, perhaps, the most famous. He was at Nelson's side when he fell, and gave aid to the dying Admiral.

Thomas Hardy immortalized this event in his poem, "The Dynasts," and brought in this illustrious ancestor in "The Trumpet Major." It is apparent why Hardy was proud of his ancestry, and regretted the downfall of his line.

Hardy's mother,while not descended from so illustrious a line as his father's, was a woman of culture and came from small landowners and literary people. Maria Childs, his great grandmother, was a sister of a newspaper editor ; his grandmother,Elizabeth Levetman,possessed a very large library

for a yeoman's daughter.[1] Books were a heritage for Thomas Hardy, and with the encouragement he received from his mother, the boy read omnivorously. Among the volumes were: Dryden's "Virgil," Johnson's "Rasselas," Bernardin de Saint Pierre's "Paul and Virginia," "Pilgrim's Progress," Ainsworth's"Windsor Castle," and "Rookwood," James' " The Ancient Régime," and the Waverly Novels.

Although English society never let Hardy forget what his father did for a living, and Hardy's first novel," The Poor Man and the Lady," was based on this class distinction, the cultured, intellectual life the Hardys led would easily place him in a higher social class in a country with more democratic ideals. The disparity of his own life weighed heavily on Hardy and became the basis for much of the tragedy in his novels. The genteel tradition, which holds a family to certain standards of ancestry and a maintenance of position in order to receive the benefit of privileges within that class, formed the barriers which prevented Hardy from receiving the further education he desired.

The mason's trade of his father led directly to Hardy's apprenticeship to an architect. It was of some satisfaction to the Hardys that their son should embrace a profession and get out of trade. It was a slight step upward, and might be the means of restoring the Hardy prestige. It is noteworthy to observe that the first fifteen years of Hardy's life and his connection with the heath and the peasants, were the most

1/ Carl J.Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.6

important influences in his life. The landscape and legends, the customs and the characters, were the means by which Hardy introduced his themes of love and tragedy. He writes of ten groups of country folk: farm hands, woodlanders, shepherds, dairymaids, furze cutters, carriers, nondescript labourers , servants and cottagers.[1]

Hardy's apprenticeship to Mr. John Hicks of Dorchester brought into his life new material which he could use for his stories. Even a country architect had a social position superior to that of a master builder such as Mr. Hardy was. The revival of interest in country churches in need of repair provided grist for the architect's mill. It led to the destruction of many beautiful architectural details, for little effort was made to restore the character of the original building. "Even in churchyards, tombstones were shuffled around in the effort to tidy up the place. This caused great concern to Hardy, and showed his sympathy for the under-dog. He set his views in a poem,"The Levelled Churchyard," which is found in 'The Poems of the Past and the Present.' " [2]

John Hicks detected the boy's unusual powers. For four years he directed Hardy's education. John Hicks realized the importance of a general knowledge of life, and he encouraged

---

1/ Lionel Johnson, The Art of Thomas Hardy, London: Mathews and Lane, 1894, p.134.

2/ Clive Holland, Thomas Hardy, O.M., p.24.

his employees to follow other lines than their chosen one. Accordingly in the architect's office, Hardy found two other boys of bookish interests, and it was through them that he developed stimulating intellectual thought. One of the boys, Henry Robert Barstow, was a stout Baptist, and Thomas Hardy's arguments with him brought about Hardy's first doubts concerning the Church of England dogma.

Part of the Victorian tradition was the stress it placed in strong church beliefs, and since the Church of England with its High Episcopalian tenets was the backbone of the genteel tradition , any one who attacked the Church of England was questioning the very roots of Victorian tradition. These discussions with young Barstow brought about a curious change in Hardy's thought. He was a sensitive boy, and he had the faculty of putting himself in another's place and getting his point of view. Part of his success in later life was due to this faculty, for he seemed to be able to see into another's heart and understand the motives he found there. When he was a young child he pretended,one day,that he was a sheep. "Getting down on all fours he crawled out into the field and pretended to eat grass. For the rest of his life he remembered his own surprise when, on looking up, he found himself encircled by real sheep staring at him in perplexed wonder at this new member of the fold." 1/

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.8.

While Hardy remained unshaken in his loyalty to the Church and its rituals all his life, for he attended church and visited cathedrals not only for their beauty of architecture but for the impressive services, he began to understand better the limitations and reservations with which the church was surrounded, and he evolved a philosophy of his own. He liked to form close attachments with people of the Church, and another influence upon him at this time was that of the Reverend Henry Moule, the Vicar of Fordington in Dorchester. His texts made deep impression upon Hardy, and one, from Job, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come," was the basis of a poem Hardy wrote in his eighty-sixth year:

"A star looks down at me
And says, 'Here I and you
Stand, each on our degree:
What do you mean to do,-
Mean to do? '

"I say : 'For all I know,
Wait and let Time go by,
Till my change come.'- 'Just so,'
The star says: ' So mean I:-
So mean I.' "

Charles Moule, the son of the Reverend Moule, served as a model for Angel Clare in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles."

One of the results of the boys' earnest theological discussions was the study of Greek by Hardy. He wanted to understand better infant baptism, atonement and immortality. Out of this study and from these arguments Hardy became interested in Darwin's "Origin of Species,"and as a supporter of these theories grew away from Victorian ideals. He still retained his interest in country affairs, and continued evenings with his violin at dances, Christmas parties and the like. His material for stories was keeping up, and his contact with country folk was enlarging his insight into their problems.

The Reverend William Barnes, a Dorset poet and philologist, had a school next to the office of Mr. Hicks. Hardy often visited him and admired his poems which appeared in the Dorset County Chronicle. One of his poems in "Woak Hill," a selection of poems made by Hardy for Ward's English Poets,was used in "Far from the Madding Crowd"(p.453). He speaks of the fire dancing in Bathsheba's and Oak's faces, and upon the old furniture:

" all a-sheenen
Wi' long years o' handlen."

When Hardy left the office of Hicks after his term of apprenticeship expired in 1861, he went to London on April 17, 1862, with a letter of recommendation to another architect, John Norton. Within a month a better opportunity in the office of Arthur Blomfield presented itself. At this time an international exhibition, inspired by Prince Albert, was

being held. To this exhibition Hardy went many times, feeling that it was a revelation of all that was modern. It was a far cry from Upper Bockhampton with its ancient Roman highway and the ruins of medieval castles in Egdon Heath. Hardy's experiences in London in the office of Blomfield and in the streets of modern London finished an education begun in the thatched cottage in Dorsetshire.

In London he was not distinguished by a country dialect from those with whom he came in contact, for although he was country bred, Hardy's mother had never allowed him to speak the rural dialect, and it was not spoken in his home. Mrs. Hardy was too conscious of the social inferiority it implied to permit the intrusion of dialect words. In one of Hardy's books," The Mayor of Casterbridge," he has Henchard correct his daughter for using the expression,"Bide where ye be." This rural expression is of the type which was forbidden in Hardy's home, because of the social inferiority it implied.

Hardy's contacts in London did much to round out his already formulated philosophy. One day he saw John Stuart Mill speaking to a group of students in Covent Garden. In listening to Mill's speech on the free-will, Hardy was won over to him and became one of his most ardent supporters. It was this idea of the limits imposed upon the human will that is responsible for mankind's unhappiness, which Hardy brought out in "Tess," and "Jude," as well as in his other novels, in a lesser degree.

In London Hardy spent much of his time studying the art galleries. He was endeavoring to absorb as much art as he could in a course of self-instruction. He had the burning urge for a better education, and by becoming familiar with Rembrandt and Del Sarto, Rubens and Correggio, the less-known Ruisdael and Hobbema, he felt that he could improve his acquaintance with the old masters. He also did not neglect his contemporaries, Van Beers and Wiertz. It was this study of the masters that brought about frequent mention of their works in his novels. Reference to effects the masters produced appear in many descriptive passages of Hardy's works. In "Under the Greenwood Tree," he says," They advanced against the sky in flat outline which suggested some processional design on Greek or Etruscan pottery." 1/ In "Desperate Remedies," he describes " a narrow bony hand that would have been an unparalleled delight to the pencil of Carlo Crivelli."

Hardy tried his hand at sketching, and while the sketches were helpful to him in his profession of architect, he did not accomplish much with them. Clive Holland, in "Thomas Hardy , O.M.," says, "His sketches supply us with evidence of his artistic sense only-they are not works of art."

All these references to the arts which Hardy had studied indicated the determination he had to better himself and elevate not only his intellectual but also his social position.

1/ Thomas Hardy, Under the Greenwood Tree, p.5.

Thomas Hardy read Swinburne with delight and went back to reread Byron, Shelley, and Keats. The poetry raised his literary standards and improved his judgment. The poems he had been attempting to write and to get published were put away, and he studiously spent his time in completing his education in the arts. He contemplated the works of Shakespeare and went to see every Shakespearean play in Drury Lane. Thus, although Hardy had only eight years of schooling, his self-education was equivalent to a college training.

In Blomfield's London office, Hardy had the experiences of restoring ecclesiastical buildings. Arthur Blomfield was a specialist in the then modern Gothic, and was opposed to Vandalism in the restoration work, and so was congenial to Hardy. His work with All Saint's, Windsor, and the Radcliffe Chapel at Oxford, provided him with local color for his novel, "Jude the Obscure." To further his formal education, Hardy went to evening classes at King's College, in the University of London.

Since in the genteel tradition a higher education is expected of the upper classes, it is interesting to see how desperately Hardy tried to acquire a formal education. He not only wished to improve his economic status but he had the normal desire for self-improvement which is in us all. Something of this struggle is brought out in "Jude the Obscure." His obscure birth served as a stimulus to carve out a better position for

himself and to retrieve the dying fortunes of the Hardy line. He was then unwilling to accept for truth the saying of Arnold Bennett to Hugh Walpole: " My dear Hugh, when you're born, you're done for." 1/

The struggle to better himself, the uncongeniality of city life caused Hardy to consider going back home for a vacation in 1867. Thomas Hardy was not meant for the kind of life a city dweller is forced to live, and when John Hicks wrote for an assistant, Hardy was glad to accept. In July, 1867, he found himself back again home in Upper Bockhampton. Although he had retired to country life, he did not give up the idea he had of writing, and remembering Thackeray and Anthony Trollope and their London successes, he felt that if he could write a novel he might have more success with it than with his poems. The work with John Hicks was not too pressing, so in 1868 he started his first novel, " The Poor Man and the Lady." The title of this manuscript is characteristic of Hardy's conviction about class distinction. His origin in the thatched cottage, his knowledge of his distinguished forbears, and his meeting with the coldness and ruthless indifference of London life, convinced him of the impregnability of the upper classes and the impossibility of a lower class to overcome prejudices against them. A line that has descended from nobility and sunk to the level of being slightly above that of peasant, is worse off than a

---

1/ Carl J.Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.7.

line which never had risen. It is more conscious of its fallen state; it struggles more bitterly to better itself, and the result is hopeless. Something of this acceptance of the genteel tradition is shown in all Hardy's works, and is described in "The Poor Man and The Lady." Hardy's doubt and pessimism, his awareness of the theory of evolution, his background of philosophic thought, and his grudge against an intellectual aristocracy, served as a basis to present his stories of the cruelty of the Victorian tradition, and the injustice of life under that system. Having read Schopenhauer, and having studied Plato from his earliest days, he tried to find a reason for all the suffering brought to humanity. He never did. He wrote in his Journal on January 29,1890: "I have been looking for God 50 years, and I think that if he had existed, I should have discovered him. As an external personality, of course-the only true meaning of the word."1/

He said in March-April in his Journal: "Altruism, or the Golden Rule....will ultimately be brought about I think by the pain we see in others reacting on ourselves, as if we and they are part of one body." 2/

Hardy's early development in writing English prose started at this time,July,1867, and in his birthplace in Upper Bockhampton.

1/ Florence Emily Hardy, The Early Life of Thomas Hardy,p.293.

2/ Idem., p.294.

CHAPTER II

HARDY'S LITERARY CAREER

"The Poor Man and the Lady," became the center of a stream of editorial criticism and comment. It was not published, since three firms of publishers united in saying it contained explosive material. Three times Hardy sent the manuscript out, and three times it returned. One of the editors who read it was Alexander MacMillan, who wrote a lengthy rejection letter in August, 1868. Another prominent publisher was George Meredith, who advised Hardy not to proceed with the novel. John Morley added a note, praising scenes in the tranter's house, but agreeing that the scenes were wildly extravagant. After the third rejection, Hardy tried no longer to get it printed.

At this time (1869), Hardy had left Hicks' employ to devote his time to writing. Since he was unsuccessful with his first book, he accepted an invitation from a Weymouth architect, G.R. Crickmay, who had purchased John Hicks'business, to be his assistant. Hicks had died, and Hardy's first professional tutor and employer passed on to his successor his promising pupil. Hardy found enough time with Crickmay to continue working on his novels, and in February, 1870, the manuscript of "Desperate Remedies" was sent to Alexander MacMillan. Upon its return Hardy sent it to Tinsley Brothers. At the suggestion of William Faux, a friend of Tinsley, it was printed

anonymously, with Hardy paying all expenses. So, on March 25, 1871, Hardy became an author. He had followed Wilkie Collins closely as a pattern, using melodrama and mystery to make the story exciting. The theme he used in this novel, the contest of an ambitious, sensual man with a self-effacing woman for a heroine was one he returned to again. Parts of the novel were from "The Poor Man and the Lady." The heartlessness of drawing-room conversations concerning the working-classes in "The Poor Man and the Lady", were more extravagant than those in "Desperate Remedies", but the latter retained the use of coincidence and melodrama to an even greater degree.

In his effort to follow Wilkie Collins' success in novel-writing,Hardy used the same Victorian technique which was so popular. Meredith called the plot "sensational",[1] and following the publisher's advice, Hardy reconstructed his plots with more restraint in his later novels.

On April 1,1871,"Desperate Remedies" received a striking review in the "Athenaeum," a periodical which had great influence in England, and "The Morning Post" carried an even better notice. "The Spectator", a Victorian vehicle which expressed the views of the genteel tradition,brought down its heavy displeasure because the story was concerning an unmarried lady owning an estate,having an illegitimate child. This was indeed heresy and lèse-majesté of the worst sort. To suppose that anyone belonging to the upper classes could stoop so low as to have an illegitimate child, must never be

1/ Florence E. Hardy, Early Life, p.83.

celebrated in print. That the lady suffered much from her error did not ameliorate the situation. Accordingly , the anonymous writer was attacked severely, and the reviewer added that the novel "must have been a desperate remedy for an emaciated purse." 1/ Hardy, reading this as he sat on a stile near his Bockhampton home, wished he were dead.

While "The Poor Man and the Lady" was considered a socialist story written too soon, "Desperate Remedies" was written as a means of attracting attention to himself. Although the novel was anonymous, it was written in the approved Victorian style of coincidence and happenchance. The intrusion of an immoral situation was the beginning of Hardy's independent literary action against the Victorian tradition. The wildly melodramatic situations "were concocted in a style which was quite against his natural grain, though too crude an interpretation of George Meredith's advice." 2/

The fresh descriptions of rural life and the skilful way Hardy handled the dialect of the Dorsetshire rustics were benefitted by his connection with Egdon Heath and his life in London and study in the art galleries there. Hardy's friend, Horace Moule, the son of the Reverend Henry Moule, advised Hardy to pay no attention to "The Spectator's" scornful review. It was a good beginning, and Hardy's entrance to a literary career was established.

1/ Florence E. Hardy, Early Life, p.111.

2/ Idem, p.112.

It was a reactionary gesture that caused Hardy to settle upon "Under the Greenwood Tree" for his next novel. The criticism of "The Spectator" had sunk deep, and the praise from "The Athenaeum," with George Meredith's advice to continue with such fresh scenes as those in the tranter's house and with dialogue in the Dorset dialect, influenced Hardy to write a second novel based entirely upon things he knew.

"Under the Greenwood Tree" dealt entirely with Mellstock affairs, church scenes, Christmas celebrations, and village musicales. This is Hardy's first artistic book. It is one of his most perfect pictures of village life. The original title, "The Mellstock Quire," suggests the type of novel in which Hardy was most interested. Since it was written while Hardy still worked at his profession as an architect, he did not pay much attention to its publication. He sent it to Tinsley, who had met him accidentally on the street, and inquired about another story. Tinsley published it in May,1872, and the new book met with a kindly reception.

The genteel tradition in "Under the Greenwood Tree " puts forth its tyrannical head when Dick Dewey applies to Head-Keeper Day for the hand of his daughter, Fancy.

"D'ye know what her mother was?" asked Mr.Day.

"No."

" A governess in a landed family, who was foolish enough to marry the Keeper of the same establishment. D'ye think

Fancy picked up her good manners, the smooth turn of her tongue, her musical skill, and her knowledge of books, in a homely hole like this? "

"No."

"Well, when I went a-wandering after her mother's death, she lived with her aunt, who kept a boarding-school, till her aunt married Lawyer Green-a man as sharp as a needle- and the school was broke up. Did ye know that then she went to the training-school, and that her name stood first among the Queen's scholars of her year?"

" I've heard so."

" Well, and do ye know what I live in such a miserly way for when I've got enough to do without it, and why I make her work as a schoolmistress instead of living here?"

" No."

" That if any young gentleman, who sees her to be his equal in polish, should want to marry her, and she want to marry him, he sha'n't be superior to her in pocket. Now do ye think after this that you be good enough for her? "

" No."

" . . ." Modest Dick's reply had faltered on his tongue, and he turned away wondering at his presumption in asking for a woman whome he had seen from the beginning to be so superior to him." 1/

1/ Thomas Hardy, Under the Greenwood Tree, pp. 208-210.

The tranter's son thus found himself catalogued and filed away by the Victorian tradition. It is good to behold that in this volume, at least, the tranter's business increases and since Dick became manager of a branch of it, he could very well be a suitable husband for Fancy. Hardy still wondered if he had done the right thing in marrying them, for later he adds:

" 'I wonder ! ' said Fancy, looking into vacancy with those beautiful eyes of hers- too refined and beautiful for a tranter's wife; but, perhaps, not too good." 1/

The Hardy trait of bringing into his stories the education he had acquired in London, especially the study of painting, appeared in this first book of countryside life. All of Hardy's descriptions are a form of art, but the formal art acquired from painstaking self-instruction was brought out whenever possible.

". . . .Mr. Penny himself being invariably seen working inside, like a framed portrait of a shoemaker by some modern Moroni." 2/ No less than thirty-three painters 3/ are alluded to in Thomas Hardy's novels, bringing out some point of portraiture which Hardy wanted emphasized. This habit of painting a picture of his characters as portraits is illustrated

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, Under the Greenwood Tree, p.259.

2/ Idem, p.87.

3/ Carl J.Weber, Hardy of Wessex, pp. 236-237.

in his description of Dick Dewey's grandfather (page 19), where he tells in detail what the old man wore, including apron, breeches and gaiters, fustian coat and boots. He describes the ridges and projecting parts of the coat, including high lights and shadows, until we can see with cameo distinctness the portrait of the old man.

There is less of the Victorian technique of coincidence and surprise in this novel than in any of the others. He also gives a hint of swerving away from the Victorian tradition of the characterization of women in "Under the Greenwood Tree." "He was convinced that women as pictured in the novels of Scott and of Dickens, as in most Victorian novels, are misrepresented." 1/ He never trusted women and never gave them the benefit of a doubt. He felt they were guileful, always, and so he pictured them in his novels.

"Under the Greenwood Tree " is a minor classic. The rural life and behavior of the village choir is done beautifully. It is a humble acknowledgement of his own place in rural life, and an acceptance of his position in society. Despite its simplicity and sweetness ," as pure and sweet as new-mown hay," 2/ the book was a failure as a best-seller. It "lacked the sentiment that lady novel-readers most admire," (Tinsley). The genteel tradition demanded sentimentality to the point of

---

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 54.

2/ Idem (Tinsley reference), p.55.

satiety. Since Hardy knew he could never give up architecture unless he wrote books which would satisfy a Victorian point of view, he agreed to start a serial for "Tinsley's Magazine" with true Victorian technique, and enough of the freshness of a Hardy characterization to satisfy the restlessness which was disturbing the public opinion of the day. Ibsen had pointed the way by stirring up people with his problem plays. Butler was shocking the public with his new and transitional points of view. Hardy wanted to keep step with the times, but he wished to be consistent enough with genteel thinking so that his books would sell. He hoped to give up architecture completely and devote himself to literary pursuits.

In September, 1872, the first installment of "A Pair of Blue Eyes" appeared. The last of the eleven installments appeared in June, 1873. Not until the end of May, 1873, was it published in book form, and then for the first time English readers saw the name "Thomas Hardy." "The Saturday Review" announced that it was"the most artistically constructed of the novels of its time," which proved how right Hardy had been in following Victorian technique to the letter.

"A Pair of Blue Eyes" was almost the extreme in improbability. It used unfortunate coincidences. Three lovers meet on a train that is carrying the heroine's body. The melodrama and surprise situations pleased such readers as Tennyson and Coventry Patmore. The friendly reception "A Pair of Blue Eyes" received in both England and America enabled Hardy to give up

his architecture and devote his time to writing.

Hardy made use of his own experiences in this novel, and his heroine, Elfride Swancourt, looked much like his wife,who was Miss Emma Gifford of St.Juliot rectory, Cornwall. Like himself , the young hero was an architect at a Cornish hamlet , where resided the pony-riding heroine of nineteen. Miss Gifford was twenty-nine, but he had Elfride pursue the same interests at nineteen as Emma Gifford pursued. Elfride sketched, and she played the organ at church. The number of coincidences in "A Pair of Blue Eyes" and the sensational surprises may be due partly to Hardy's desire to have something startling happen in each installment in the magazine. It pleased the reading public of the day, and the amazing incidents of finding a missing earring at the most embarrassing moment, or of Elfride's meeting in Cornwall the one person she wished to avoid, did not lessen the genteel reader's enjoyment. The vivid description of Elfride's resourcefulness in rescuing Knight from the edge of the cliff, is a gripping scene which Hardy described with cunning reality.

With such tales as this Hardy gained new friends. The American critic, William Dean Howells, became a firm admirer of Hardy's works. A story is related that Edmund Gosse, English critic and a friend of Hardy, sometime later (1886) wrote to Howells and expressed his displeasure at what he considered a snub to Hardy. The snub was a remark made by

James Russell Lowell to Julian Hawthorne, son of Nathaniel, in which he said : "I had been told that Mr. Thomas Hardy was very good, and I took up one of his books-"Two on a Tower"- but did not get on with it. Afterward I met him; he is small and unassuming in appearance-does not look like the genius of tradition." 1/

Howells attempted to smooth over the unfortunate remark, but Hardy was wounded and his sense of inferiority increased. A Victorian author's skin was thinner than that of the authors of today who bear similar criticism unshrinkingly.

The rankling thought of the social inferiority implied in the trade of a mason is brought out in "A Pair of Blue Eyes." When Stephen first tells Elfride of his love for her, he felt compelled to tell her the truth of his origin.

" 'What do you think my father is - does for his living, that is to say ?' he asked.

' He practices some profession or calling, I suppose.'

' No, he is a mason.'

' A Freemason ?'

' No; a cottager and journeyman mason.'" 2/

Elfride inquires about his mother.

' Is she a nice lady ?'

' Very- the best mother in the world. Her people had been well-to-do yeomen for centuries, but she was only a dairymaid.'

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.105

2/ Thomas Hardy, A Pair of Blue Eyes, p.82.

" ' O Stephen ! ' came from her in whispered exclamation. ' I do own that it seems odd to regard you in the light of-of-having been so rough in your youth, and done menial things of that kind.' " 1/

Elfride was the daughter of a vicar, which immediately placed her in another class from that of the unfortunate Stephen. She observes again: " ' How plain everything about you seems after this explanation! Your peculiarities in chess-playing, the pronunciation papa noticed in your Latin, your odd mixture of book-knowledge with ignorance of ordinary social accomplishments, are accounted for in a moment. And has this anything to do with what I saw at Lord Luxellian's ? ' " 2/

Stephen's desire to become educated parallels Hardy's own efforts. Stephen went to live with his uncle, a blacksmith, in order to attend a national school as a day scholar. He then met Knight (who could be compared with John Hicks, Hardy's first employer and tutor), and Stephen then went to Exonbury (Dorchester) as a pupil in an architect's office. After his apprenticeship there, he went to London, quite as Hardy had done.

Elfride said , in a troubled tone, " 'Yes, I see how this inequality may be made to trouble us ! ' " 3/

1/ Thomas Hardy, A Pair of Blue Eyes, p.83.

2/ Idem, p.84.

3/ Idem, p.86.

Since Knight had a fine old family name and an honored profession, he was more nearly Elfride's social equal. The scene with Elfride and Knight at the mediaeval tower, where Elfride essayed to walk around the parapet and Knight was forced to rescue her from falling, might be given a double interpretation. Towers and castles were frequently used by Hardy as symbolical of power and tradition. This old tower, which was to be replaced by a new one, is indicative of a changing Victorian tradition. Elfride's effort to walk around the parapet could show the struggle of one class in society to maintain its social heights, and the danger that is always present to those people who are half-way between the social classes. Even Elfride's family had declined a little, for her mother had descended from Lord Luxellian, and had run away with a curate.

The coincidence of Elfride's losing an earring on the cliff when she was with one man, and finding it again when she was with another, was based on an incident in Hardy's own life, when he was walking on the Dover Cliffs with Miss Gifford, and she lost an earring. The Victorian technique of melodrama was used in the frequent meetings of Elfride and her lovers in graveyards and vaults. While Elfride was with Knight, the master-mason told her Stephen was down in the vault,"a-looking at the departed coffins." 1/

1/ Thomas Hardy, A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 307.

Elfride's conversation with her former lover in the vault is significant of the Victorian love of the gruesome and the unusual setting. The meeting of the two lovers on the train that bore the body of Elfride was a coincidence, planned to delight the genteel reader. The inference is strong throughout " A Pair of Blue Eyes," that had Elfride not stepped out of her class to love Stephen Smith, she might have been happy as the wife of Harry Knight.

The success of "A Pair of Blue Eyes " pleased Leslie Stephen, the editor of the "Cornhill Magazine" so much that he asked Hardy for a serial. The summer of 1873 Hardy spent in Upper Bockhampton, working on a new manuscript. Publication began in January, 1874, before Hardy had finished. The new novel was called "Far from the Madding Crowd." Hardy engaged an illustrator for this story, and Helen Paterson's sketches pleased him very much. The novel was published seven times in one year, and through Leslie Stephen Hardy became acquainted with his new publishers, Smith, Elder and Company.

The genteel readers were now taking such an interest in Thomas Hardy's works, that Stephen advised Hardy to tone down certain parts of the novel. Fannie Robin's seduction would have to be treated in a less vivid way so that Victorian morals would not be offended. The theme of class distinction is again brought out in the shepherd, Gabriel Oak, and the landowner, Bathsheba Everdene. Boldwood, the farmer, who would logically be the one in Bathsheba's class whom she

should marry, is not given the fine qualities that Oak has, nor is the character of Troy, the soldier, allowed the distinction given Oak.

The passage most criticized was that in which Miss Everdene's father was described as sitting with her mother in their shop behind closed doors.

"... 'he made her take off her wedding ring and calling her by her maiden name ... would fancy she was only his sweetheart, and not married to him at all. And as soon as he could thoroughly fancy he was doing wrong and committing the seventh, a' got to like her as well as ever.' " 1/

It is in "Far from the Madding Crowd" that Hardy's work has first been compared to that of George Eliot. The style and material of many passages are alike. In George Eliot's "The Mill on the Floss," the description of the inn, with its muddy lanes leading to it, the sanded floor and the scent of beer, is phrasing similar to Hardy's realistic descriptions of inns. Mrs. Hardy did not agree 2/, however, for she said that George Eliot had never touched life in the fields as Hardy had. "... Her country people having seemed to him more like small townsfolk than rustics; and as evidencing a woman's wit cast in country dialogue rather than real country humour, which he regarded as rather of the Shakespeare and Fielding sort." 3/

1/ Thomas Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd.
2/ Florence E.Hardy, Early Life, p. 129.
3/ Idem.

However, since Hardy had been reading Comte's " Positive Philosophy," a work of which it had been said that George Eliot was also fond, Mrs. Hardy hazarded a guess that expressions from this and similar works passed into the vocabulary of both Hardy and Eliot. This seems a rather far-fetched conjecture as to the similarity of descriptive passages from both writers, and we may lay it to the fact that both writers were acquainted with country inns and rustic scenes, and through their powerful gifts of writing realistically they were able to give a similar effect of reality.

One very pleasing result of the success of "Far from the Madding Crowd" was the receipt of a letter by Hardy from a former "grande dame" of his parish, calling him her "dear Tommy" and signing herself "Julia Augusta." 1/ This bending down of the aristocracy thrilled Hardy, for she was a boyhood memory of the unapproachable class, seen only from a distance as she rustled and "whewed" down the aisle at church. He replied to the letter, but his natural modesty and his preoccupation with his writings kept him from calling to see her.

Hardy had started work on a novel which was to be called, "The Woodlanders," but the unexpected popularity of " A Pair of Blue Eyes," had suddenly pushed him into the lime-light, and he found that the genteel reading public were quite horrified at finding out that their newly-discovered author was a house-decorator! 2/ He felt that if he continued to write

1/ Florence E. Hardy, Early Life, p.134.
2/ Idem, p.135.

about rustic matters, he would be stamped as a sheep-farmer, and the reading public would expect nothing beyond this from him. So he put aside the manuscript for "The Woodlanders," and, in response to the demands from his editors, to their consternation offered the tale "The Hand of Ethelberta- A Comedy in Chapters."

This novel was quite different from the story of a country life, where Sergeant Troy danced the sword dance for Bathsheba,and the scenes around the burning hayrick with the approaching thunderstorm. All the vivid descriptions and strong characterization were swept aside for a tale of the Victorian tradition. It was Hardy's fear of class prejudices and his sensitive reaction to public opinion that forced him back into writing a third-rate novel based on the old technique of melodrama, coincidence, and surprise. His conscious desire was to show his new-made public that he was as much at home in the drawing-room as in the fields. Of course Hardy was completely out of his element in writing of society, and although Mrs. Hardy attempted to show that this tale was written thirty years too soon,[1/] as "The Poor Man and the Lady" was, and tried to put the emphasis on the comedy purpose behind the plot, it was nevertheless true that Hardy was incapable of social satire.

1/ Florence E. Hardy, Early Life, p.143

In the increasing popularity of Hardy, he was invited into society more and more, and he patiently attended many social affairs with his wife. However, as the years went on, he perceived the emptiness of much that society represented and withdrew into himself, until at "Max Gate," his final home, he retired to the secluded country life he loved so well. At the time of writing "The Hand of Ethelberta," however, Hardy was increasingly conscious of his social position, and he felt that if he wrote convincingly of high social life, he could assure his reading public that his status was as good as any of theirs.

Only very occasionally the real Hardy appears in dialogue. The hostler at the Angleberry Inn rebuked David Straw in true Hardy style.

"...Chok' it all, why should I think there's sommat going on at Knollsea ? Honest travelling have been so rascally abused since I was a boy in pinners by tribes of nobodies tearing from one end o' the country to t'other.... that, upon my song, when life and death's in the wind, there's no telling the difference ! " 1/

The true saltiness of Hardy appears in isolated speeches such as this, but the social climbing of Ethelberta and the posing of her family as her servants brought nothing to

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Hand of Ethelberta, p.6.

Hardy's readers but disappointment. Ethelberta is a trickster. Picotee and Faith are the only ones who stand out in memory.

Mrs. Hardy was annoyed that Hardy was criticised for having Ethelberta's father present as a butler where she was a guest. She said : "Yet a similar situation has been applauded in a play in recent years by Mr. Bernard Shaw, without any sense of improbability." 1/

The criticism of this novel brought about the ending of Hardy's connection with Leslie Stephen as an editor, although not as a friend, and caused Hardy to "lie fallow" for two years.

It was a period of taking stock for Hardy, and it did him a great deal of good, for at the end of two years,Hardy had produced a masterpiece. "The Return of the Native" was written in 1877 at Sturminster-Newton. In writing "The Return of the Native", Hardy made strict observance of the unities, and he made a sketch map of the region, in order to guide himself in describing the movement of his characters. This map became the first which is a common feature in the modern editions of the Wessex novels. The days spent in writing this novel were afterward regarded as his "happiest time." It began as a serial in January, 1878, and ran

1/ Florence E. Hardy, Early Years, p.143

for twelve months in the "Belgravia" magazine. In 1878, the novel was published in book form.

In spite of Hardy's careful attention to the unities- the only novel upon which he lavished such structural care- he was amazed at the reception the public gave the book. It was called "distinctly inferior" 1/ to anything he had written. No one spoke of the beautiful working design or the masterful descriptive passages. There were a few who praised it, including the Bishop of London, Mandell Creighton, 2/ and in America, "Harper's Magazine." But for fifteen years the book was put aside, and not until later was it recognized as a classic. The rich Wessex traditions and customs, the Christmas play of Saint George by the "mummers", the pricking of Eustacia in church by a needle "to put an end to her bewitching of children," and the effigy of Eustacia stuck full of pins and held in the fire until it melted, form a rich stock of Wessex legends which were a basis for the superstitions of the lower classes in English society.

The status of Eustacia's social position as compared with Clym Yeobright's is brought out in the passage where Eustacia is talking to Mrs. Yeobright. 3/

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.73.

2/ Idem, p.74

3/ Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native, p.280.

"It was a condescension in me to be Clym's wife."

"Oh !" said Mrs. Yeobright. '...." I have never heard anything to show that my son's lineage is not as good as the Vyes'-perhaps better."

Eustacia's grandfather had been "A naval officer of some sort or other." 1/

Hardy placed Mrs. Yeobright's status thus:2/

"The air with which she looked at heathmen betokened a certain unconcern at their presence....Thus indirectly implying that in some respect or other they were not up to her level. The explanation lay in the fact that though her husband had been a small farmer, she herself was a curate's daughter who had once dreamed of doing better things."

We have seen so far the divisions the classes made for themselves. At the top was the curate; next in importance was the solicitor and architect; below him was the landowner and farmer; next was the dairyman and mason; and at the next level were the tranters, furzemen, heathmen, reddlemen, and the other country rustics.

When one belonging to the same social position as the rector fell to the lower distinction of furze-cutter, it was sad indeed. Eustacia was made extremely unhappy when

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native, p.8.

2/ Idem, p.35.

Clym, recently returned from the city, chose willingly the occupation of furze-cutter.

"It was bitterly plain to Eustacia that he did not care much about social failure; and the proud woman bowed her head and wept in sick despair."1/

And again:"....To see him there, a poor afflicted man, earning money by the sweat of his brow, had at first moved her to tears." 2/

Eustacia begged Clym to take her to Paris.

"'Yes, take me to Paris, Clym ! I don't mind how humbly we live there at first, if it can only be Paris and not Egdon Heath." 3/

When Wildeve came into a fortune of eleven thousand pounds, it raised him in status and caused Eustacia to consider him : "A man of fair professional education, and one who had served his articles with a civil engineer." 4/

Eustacia loved what money could bring and the travel it made possible. The acquisition of money lifted one from one social status to another then, even in Victorian England.

The fine character of reddleman Venn, socially inferior to the Yeobrights, who could sacrifice his own desires if it would help Thomasin to be happy, is the way Hardy chose to

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native, p.291.
2/ Idem
3/ Idem,p.284
4/ Idem, p.346.

prove that social standing does not determine the finer qualities of character. Venn, and the shepherd, Gabriel Oak, are estimable without being sentimental or weaklings. Venn's marriage to Thomasin is the happy ending to this Hardy tragedy.

Although "The Return of the Native" was received by an unappreciative world, Hardy's publishers, Chatto and Windus, thought they had found an important literary writer. They asked for another contribution, a short or long piece of work. Hardy had nothing ready, but in going over his papers, he found the manuscript of the much criticised "The Poor Man and The Lady". Hardy had used parts of it for his other novels. Passages had gone into "Desperate Remedies." Ethelberta's society friends were taken partly from Mrs. Allamont. There were some chapters left, so Hardy changed the names of the characters, revised it somewhat, and chose the title "An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress." The story appeared in the "New Quarterly" for July, 1878. Although Hardy was a little ashamed of it, the editor was satisfied, and asked for more short stories. This started Hardy as a contributor of short stories to the magazines, and before the end of his life he had written over forty.

Since "An Indiscretion" was a revision of Hardy's earlier work, "The Poor Man", it naturally had the characteristics of Hardy's first literary efforts. It had coincidence and surprise, melodrama and all the clap-trap the

genteel readers liked. Miss Allamond became Miss Allenville, and her father was a Squire and large landowner. The hero was Egbert Mayne, a poor schoolmaster of a one-room school, attended by poor children of five years and up. Miss Allenville, upon her visit to school, called the children "poor little wretches."[1] The schoolmaster "watched the rain spots thickening upon the faded frocks, worn-out tippets, yellow straw hats and bonnets, and coarse pinafores of his unprotected little flock."[2]

Although Geraldine calls him "Egbert", she "had never even hinted to him to call her by her Christian name, and finding that she did not particularly wish it, he did not care to do so."[3] Later, "how could he picture her in a cottage as his wife, or himself in a mansion as her husband?"[4]

When Geraldine asked her father's permission to be acquainted with a worthy man, he answered :

"That depends upon his rank and circumstances."[5]

The natural English habit of presenting superior rank by the kind of house it possesses is demonstrated here by Hardy in the abode of the Squire, which Hardy terms "manor-house."

1/ Thomas Hardy, "An Indiscretion", p.47.
2/ Idem ,p.47.
3/ Idem, p.74
4/ Idem, p.73.
5/ Idem, p.72.

"The house was built of clear grey freestone throughout, in that plainer fashion of classicism which prevailed at the latter end of the eighteenth century.....a projection at either side, surmounted by a pediment." 1/ This description was used for "Knapwater House" in "Desperate Remedies" and applied to the Squire's house as well.

Egbert's servant, a laborer on his grandfather's farm, addresses him as "Mister Mayne",placing him a step above that of a farm-worker, although Egbert was several steps below Miss Allenville. Geraldine was "sometimes a trifle vexed that...he never dressed for dinner, or made use of a carriage in his life." 2/

The habit of the poor walking while the rich rode was brought out in the passage where Geraldine asks how far it was to the town of Westcombe, which could be seen from the tower where they were standing. Egbert said, "Two hours." Geraldine said she thought it would take less time for eight miles, the distance she thought. Egbert said he meant walking, while Geraldine meant riding.

Geraldine wrote to Egbert: "If I could accept your addresses without entire loss of position, I would do so; but since this cannot be, we must forget each other." 3/

In spite of the stiltedness of the scenes in high society, the story was liked, and opened the door for other short stories.

1/ Thomas Hardy, Desperate Remedies, p.72 (Chapter V)
2/ Thomas Hardy,"An Indiscretion", p.75.
3/ Idem, p.103.

The London Graphic printed "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" in 1883, and it immediately became more popular in America than in England. Incidents from this story were kept as a basis for Hardy's later novel, "Tess of the D'Urbervilles". The subject of dairying was especially pleasing to Hardy, who included it in his short stories as well as his novels. In "The Three Strangers", published in March, 1883, Hardy writes:"Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter....who brought fifty guineas in her pocket." 1/ The social standing of a shepherd in comparison with that of a dairyman is again inferred here as being inferior.

In "The Withered Arm," published in "Blackwood's Magazine", in January, 1888, Rhoda Brook has had a son by farmer Lodge. When the farmer takes a young wife, Rhoda said to her son to go and look at the young woman and to come back and tell her "if she seems like a woman who has ever worked for a living, or one that has always been well off, and has never done anything, and shows the marks of the lady on her." 2/ Rhoda explains that hands show a person's rank. "....Notice if her hands be white; if not, see if they look as though she had ever done housework, or are milker's hands like mine." 3/ The young lad sees the bride in church with a gown that

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, Wessex Tales, p.38.
2/ Idem, p.67.
3/ Idem, p.67.

"whewed and whistled" when it rubbed against the church pews.

The young bride, Gertrude, goes to see Rhoda about her arm which has mysteriously withered. When she finds that the dairy people meant that she consult a conjurer, she expresses the annoyance that an upper class feels for the superstitions of a lower :

"O, how could my people be so superstitious as to recommend a man of that sort ! I thought they meant some medical man. I shall think no more of him !" 1/

In "The Distracted Preacher", published in April,1879, the result of a young curate falling in love with his young smuggling landlady is recounted. Class distinction is not so much dwelt upon as the moral problem faced by the preacher, Reverend Stockdale.

In "Fellow Townsmen" published in April,1880, the poor shepherd and the lonely foot-traveler are contrasted with the rich who rode in phaetons. The shops in this English tale close at eight in the evening which suggests a long day of labor for the shop-keepers. "Barnet walked from his lonely home down the street of shops that were slamming up the shutters from end to end of the town." 2/

Like Poe and De Maupassant, Hardy based his short stories on anecdotes. Coincidence plays a large part in his short stories as well as in his novels, and the irony of blighted hopes is traced as well in these shorter pieces of work as in

1/ Thomas Hardy, Wessex Tales, p.81.
2/ Idem, p.113.

the longer. "A Tragedy of Two Ambitions" occurred because of the ambitions of two sons to make a suitable marriage for their sister. In allowing the drunken father to drown, the irony of the episode lies in the permanent record of their deed by means of a walking stick taking root and growing. Hardy called these stories "little ironies" and allows the episodes to pass without further comment.

CHAPTER III

FURTHER SUCCESSES FOR GENTEEL READERS

The Hardys returned from a trip to the Continent, visiting such resorts as Boulogne, Amiens, Etretat and Havre. The day of their return to London, October 23, 1880, a new novel "founded on testimony" concerning the defence of England against Napoleon was published by a magazine called "Good Words."[1/]

Hardy had found it difficult to make the characters in this story come alive. As a boy he had failed to enjoy the novels of Sir Walter Scott because of a lack of sympathy with the spirit of historical romance. However, the novel was very well received, and it was given good notices in the "Saturday Review," which refused to believe that the characters were anything less than the finest. "Mr. Hardy in his latest novel has produced perhaps a finer study of character, in a certain sense, than he has before given to his readers." The "Athenaeum" also stated that " Mr.Hardy seems to be in the way to do for rural life what Dickens did for that of the town." The " Times" also stated as well that they liked "The Trumpet Major" better than "The Return of the Native," and nearly as much as "Far from the Madding Crowd."

1/Carl J.Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.85.

Social status is mentioned less in this novel than in any of Hardy's works. Possibly he was struggling with historical data and the attempts to make his characters come to life. There are a few references to position, however.

"Those who have lived in remote places where there is what is called no society will comprehend the gradual leveling of distinctions that went on in this case at some sacrifice of gentility on the part of one household," Hardy remarks in one place.[1] In another passage the trumpet-major said to Anne Garland :

"But I am not worthy of the daughter of a genteel professional man- that's what you mean?"

"There's something more than worthiness required in such cases, you know,.....I mean the woman ought to love the man."[2]

The scene where everyone in town and the surrounding country gathered to see royalty,the Prince of Wales and his court, is just such a scene as could take place anywhere at any time. All love a spectacle where the aristocracy appears in glittering array, and the King arriving ashore from his royal yacht was a sight deserving cheers and salutes. The gorgeous crimson satin fringed with gold that hung around the royal box at the theatre was in keeping with the mood of the times- a love of display and ornate trappings to surround

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Trumpet-Major, p.3.

2/ Idem, p.115.

that highest of all social distinctions-the King of England.

The miller Loveday's son Bob came home from a seafaring life and told of meeting Miss Matilda Johnson. "....he had asked Miss Johnson to be his wife. In her kindness she, though sacrificing far better prospects, had agreed." 1/ The miller himself had liked the society of Mrs. Garland, and had pondered the question whether she should share his home "even though she was a little his superior in antecedents and knowledge." 2/

The magazine that printed "The Trumpet-Major" ran it as a serial. Before it had ceased with the last installment of the novel, Hardy had engaged with the European edition of "Harper's Magazine" to supply a novel. He had started writing "A Laodicean", and it appeared in December, 1880. Unfortunately for Hardy, he had not completed this story. His trip to the Continent had caused his naturally frail constitution to break down, and he was forced to his bed. He did not give up the idea of completing the story, in order to complete his contract and not to disappoint the editor. Hardy dictated the story to his wife. It is agreed by most of Hardy's critics and readers that this novel is the poorest he wrote. Carl J. Weber said: "No novel of his is as full of autobiography as is this one." 3/

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Trumpet-Major, p.121.

2/ Idem, p.93.

3/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.87.

It is sure that most of Hardy's experience as an architect was brought into this book. He brought in the themes of social position and church arguments. He even brought in his travels on the Continent and such episodes as a garden party that is broken up by a thunder shower.

The social significance of castles and towers is fully conceived, shown from the architect's point of view. With all these diversions, Hardy reverts to melodrama and Victorian sensationalism to round out a wandering tale. Hardy felt ashamed of it and later destroyed the manuscript.[1/] He made a tentative apology for it in the "preface" of the story, saying it was a means for whiling away an afternoon.

The description of one of his aristocratic characters was copied from an article in the "Quarterly Review" for 1833. A passage by a literary critic, Charles Apperly, described the character in "The Trumpet-Major", Sir William De Stancy.[2/] This maneuver indicates Hardy's complete inability to depict characters of the upper class. He had copied a description of the militia company drill from an obscure book called "Gifford's History"[3/], and had made no mention of this borrowing of 275 of Gifford's exact words. His reason for doing this was possibly because of his illness and resulting inability to adapt an historical account to his story. His borrowing

---

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.88.

2/ Idem, p.88.

3/ Idem, p.86.

a description of an upper class character was due to his complete inability to understand them, and his feeling that another author could do the passage better.

When Hardy was well enough to get up and go about again, he had a brief excursion into the theatre. He wrote a play based on "Far From the Madding Crowd", and had it improved by the London critic, Comyns Carr. The management of the St. James Theatre told him he might expect production sometime in 1881. But in December, 1881, the "Times" announced a new play by Sir Arthur W. Pinero, called "The Squire", to be produced at the St.James Theatre. Hardy found the theme to be exactly the same as his own- "a woman ruling a farm and marrying a soldier secretly, while unselfishly beloved by her shepherd or bailiff." 1/

Hardy also sent a letter of criticism to the "Daily News" and the St. James Theatre. He received a letter from Pinero who stated he knew nothing of Hardy's play. It is possible that Pinero talked over his new play with one of the managers of the St. James Theatre, who, knowing of Hardy's play, described the plot without revealing the author. The discussion was carried on in the press, and Hardy found the same sort of disappointment he had suffered earlier with his poems. Thus the irony Hardy often brought out in his stories appeared in Hardy's career in the guise of Sir Arthur Pinero,"the

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, Letter to London Times, January 1, 1882.

impersonator of Heaven's persistent irony." 1/

In June of that same year(1882), Hardy decided to write a story "setting two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe." He visited Wimborne and discovered a tower in Charborough Park, an estate near Wimborne which he felt would be a suitable background for his characters. He visited Greenwich Observatory, and then was ready to write his novel "Two on a Tower." Viviette was the upper class lady who loved too well the poor young astronomer, Swithin-St.Cleeve. Although Viviette has qualities of unselfishness that are beautifully portrayed, she never comes to life as Bathsheba Everdene or Eustacia Vye do. She is as stilted a representative of the upper class as the Bishop of Melchester and Lady Constantine. The Victorian moral was pointed and underscored that a lady of the upper class should never stoop to love a man of a lower class, without dire results. As the Indian philosopher, Bhattacharya said :

"A man of a higher group may take in marriage a girl from a lower group. But a girl of a higher group is never given to a bridegroom of a lower class, except where the parents of the former are too poor to marry her to a boy of the same or a superior group." 2/

Viviette's husband in the far east was sufficient excuse why she could not marry the young astronomer at first,

---

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Essex, p.92.

2/ Bhattacharya,"Hindu Castes and Sects","The Brahmans of Maithilas", p.46.

but the inference is that she should not have lowered herself to accept young Swithin as lover under any conditions.

Victorian readers disliked Viviette's deception of the parentage of her son to the Bishop, and decided that the clergy was being satirized. Hardy stated that "the Bishop was every inch a gentleman, and the parish priest who figures in the narrative is one of its most estimable characters."

There was such a chorus of disapproval that an article by Havelock Ellis in the "Westminster Review", April, 1883, praising "Two on a Tower" heartened Hardy and persuaded him to continue writing. Genteel tradition, when it is offended, does a great deal to hamper creative genius, and if it were not for the courageous great who dare to express a contrary opinion, few masterpieces would be written.

Hardy's next novel was about material he had known all his life. "The Mayor of Casterbridge" was a picture of Dorchester with its bridges and loafers, its inn and the walks along the Froom river. This novel differs from Hardy's other novels of country life in that it concerned towns and townspeople. He centered the story around one character, Michael Henchard, and retained the supporting characters sufficiently to make them recognizable and artistic, but the center of the stage belonged to Henchard. Farfrae was brought into the story "to annoy native Scots with his accent(picked up by Hardy in 1881 from a young Edinburgh cab driver)." 1/

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.101.

Elizabeth,-Jane, Susan, and Lucetta are kept in the background and never emerge as too prominent in the story.

The search of Susan for her husband started out from a desire to "better" Elizabeth-Jane's position in life.

"The sight of the girl made her mother sad....how could she become a woman of wider knowledge, higher repute- 'better', as she termed it. She sought further into things than other girls in her position ever did, and her mother groaned as she felt she could not aid in the search." 1/

When Susan discovered Henchard, he was Mayor of Casterbridge, and because he was "with a reputation to keep up, he could not invite her to come to his house till some definite course had been decided on." 2/ This sort of hospitality, especially to a woman who was still his wife, was not quite understandable to a modern society, but it appealed to a genteel era where tradition opposition and its standards were the accepted code of conduct. Henchard met Susan at nightfall at the "Ring of Casterbridge", one of the oldest Roman amphitheatres in Britain. It was a clandestine meeting with every appearance of the wish of Henchard to avoid his fellow-townsmen's eyes. He tells Susan he doesn't see how he can accept openly his wife and daughter, since all know how badly he had treated them. He has a plan to make it all "genteel",however, and wants her to take lodgings in High Street.

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Mayor of Casterbridge, p.28.

2/ Idem, p.83.

"... you must start genteel if our plan is to be carried out," 1/ he told her. He thinks he will woo her again, and re-marry her later.

The fact that "The Mayor of Casterbridge" had less melodrama than some of his earlier novels and more of the real surprises of life make it outstanding as a departure from standard Victorian technique. His character drawing of Mayor Henchard pleased both Robert Louis Stevenson and George Gissing, who confessed: "In your books I have constantly found refreshment and onward help." 2/

Written in 1884-85, this novel was published in "The Graphic" as a serial in 1886. The English version differed from the American in that Hardy eliminated from the English version Henchard's return to Elizabeth-Jane's wedding, and the slow starvation of the poor bird in the garden. In the 1895 English edition this chapter was restored, the genteel readers in England accepting the revision.

Thomas Hardy and his wife realized a personal ambition at this time, for they had built and moved into a modest manor-house one mile east of Dorchester, which they called "Max Gate." The place was lonely, as the heart of Hardy was prone to be, and it was elevated by a turret which gave an extended view of the surrounding country. The turret was the salient feature of manor-houses and castles, and it symbolized Hardy's

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Mayor of Casterbridge, p.85.

2/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.104.

yearnings to belong to the class which occupied such dwellings. The disposition to choose a lonely location indicates Hardy's withdrawal from the world, his love of nature and introspection, and his wish to stand alone as a solitary figure dependent on no man's will.

Hardy planted two or three thousand small trees, mostly Austrian pines,[1] and these grew so thickly that the house was entirely screened from the road. In summer, the house appeared as if at the bottom of a dark green well of trees. The house was started November 26, 1883, and was finished eighteen months later. The Hardys moved in June 29,1885, and almost their first visitor was Robert Louis Stevenson.

The first novel written at Max Gate was "The Woodlanders." Hardy's seclusion gave him opportunity not only to write more about the Wessex country he loved, but for the first time he turned to question seriously how far the organization of society itself is responsible for man's unhappiness.[2] In previous novels, through the dialogue of characters, Hardy brings out the import of class and the effect it had on their lives, but in "The Woodlanders" its characters are the first of Hardy's creations to blame neither God nor themselves but human conventions.[3]

1/ Florence E. Hardy, Early Life, p.226.

2/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.109.

3/ Idem, p.110.

George Melbury, a timber-merchant, wished to marry his daughter to the son of a man whom he had wronged, Giles Winterborne. However, when a better match came along in young Dr. Fitzpiers, he urged her to marry him instead. Marty South, a young girl who made spars to support herself and her father, loved Giles, and remained his true love to the end, although her love was unrequited. Grace married Fitzpiers, but finds she still loves Giles. Finding her husband to be cruel, she rushed off to Giles' cottage. He, thinking of her reputation, gave her the security of his home and slept outside under the trees. His anxiety to protect her led to his own undoing, for the weather was unkind, and he was wet to the skin by rain. Too late, Grace took him into the house saying,"...how selfishly correct I am always-too,too correct ! Cruel propriety is killing the dearest heart that ever woman clasped to her own." 1/ Giles is attended by her husband, Dr. Fitzpiers, who believes the worst about her, since she proudly but falsely states that his inference is correct. Giles dies, and Fitzpiers states that the woman for whom he left his wife, Felice Charmond, is also dead. The return of Grace to her husband is not a happy one, but made in the spirit of resignation. Marty's empty triumph of now having the dead Giles to herself, is an inadequate ending for her own romance.

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders, p.309.

Mr. Melbury's ambition for his daughter, which led to this tragedy, was summed up in his conversation with his wife.

" I know Grace will gradually sink down to our level again and catch our manners and way of speaking, and feel a drowsy content in being Giles' wife. But I can't bear the thought of dragging down to that old level as promising a piece of maidenhood as ever lived- fit to ornament a palace wi'- that I've taken so much trouble to lift up. Fancy her white hands getting redder every day, and her tongue losing its pretty up-country curl in talking, and her bounding walk becoming the regular Hintock shail and wamble !" 1/

Robert Creedle sums up the trouble with Grace to Giles Winterborne:

"Well, all I can say is, then, that she ought to hob-and-nob elsewhere. They shouldn't have schooled her so monstrous high, or else bachelor men shouldn't give randys, or if they do, give 'em only to their own race." 2/

Dr. Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond represent a sophisticated urban society. Their coming to the woodlands brings sorrow and pain. They are as unreconciled to the simple country life as Eustacia was in "The Return of the Native." The unhappy blend of society with rural people is the theme

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders, p.80.

2/ Idem, p.79.

which Hardy chose to question the responsibility of society's organization for man's unhappiness.

Hardy considered this novel to be his best. His first visitor to Max Gate, R.L. Stevenson, also thought so. He liked the delicate quality of the book, the meekness of Marty who was overlooked by Giles, as she might be by the reader. Her loyalty proves that not all of Hardy's women are fickle and vain. There is a quiet picturesqueness and simple dignity, and a description of the seasons is masterful.

Hardy did not think the term "Immanent Will" fitted his idea of the force or urge in the universe that drives man onward. He did not like to call it "He" or "She" 1/ and he had no better word to offer as substitute to Schopenhauer's"Will." In "The Woodlanders" he calls it the "Unfulfilled Intention":

"Here,as everywhere, the Unfulfilled Intention, which makes life what it is, was as obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper was interrupted; the lichen ate the vigor of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling." 2/

"The Woodlanders" was published by MacMillan,March 15, 1887, and the editor, John Morley, was the same publisher who refused Hardy's first two manuscripts. MacMillan asked for another novel, and Hardy promised to have something ready

---

1/ C.J.Weber, Hardy of Essex, p.198.
2/ Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders, p.52.

by 1889. He did not feel rushed now. All his novels were selling, so he leisurely collected notes for his new book. All his life he had been getting ready for writing about Tess. The novel,"Tess of the D'Urbervilles" climaxed his literary career.

The problem of poverty was not a new one. Hardy had seen large families which were like his description of the ivy in "The Woodlanders" which had become dwarfed and sickly for want of sunlight. The deterioration of morals in a condition of want was a fact known to Victorian society and spoken of in whispers. It might be a good time now(1888) to bring the subject out into the open. Ibsen had spoken openly of it in "Ghosts"(1881). Trollope had touched upon it in his "Vicar of Bullhampton." George Eliot's "Adam Bede", Scott's "Heart of Midlothian", and Dickens'"David Copperfield" dealt with the seduction theme. In America, Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter", with its unfortunate Hester Prynne who was forced to wear the letter "A" for the word "adultress" on her bosom, was causing literary excitement. The partner in crime, Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale,was not allowed to escape punishment by the author any more than Hardy intended to allow Tess's seducer to escape. Puritanical New England had an old law that a woman convicted of adultery be put to death. Hester's escape from this fate was due to the mercy of the magistrates who judged her.

While there was no old English law apparent to Hardy which dealt as strongly with women offenders of this sort, Hardy intended to show how merciless a destiny was that drove a "pure woman" through circumstances that led to her final downfall. Poverty and despair would force a girl back into the arms of her seducer, Hardy believed. The comfort of church dogma and views is denied to those who are driven by nature's laws to anti-social acts.

Hardy's acquaintance with large families of Dorsetshire, struggling with the problem of existence, led him to place his new heroine, Tess, in such a family. While he was standing on a corner in Dorchester,one day, he overheard a drunkard mumble that he "had a great family vault over at Bere Regis." 1/ Upon investigation, he found this to be true, and, basing the Durbeyfield family on this idea, he had them descended from the aristocratic family of D'Urbervilles.

It is a possibility that Hardy was thinking of the decline in his own family fortune, also, for the knowledge of his descent remained with him throughout life. The bitterness he felt about the fall of a great line was brought out in the life of John Durbeyfield. The name"Durbeyfield"itself was taken from the drunkard's family, for Hardy found from his investigation that the old Turberville family was

---

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.122.

buried at Bere Regis. Many humble families of a corrupted surname of the Turbervilles still lived in Dorchester, and the commonest name was Troublefield. Hardy discovered that one of the names of Turberville was not of that name by descent at all, but was the brother of Blackmore, the author of "Lorna Doone." 1/ He had changed his name to Turberville because he found that the ancient family had almost died out, and he wished to be identified with an old and honorable family.

It can be seen where Hardy got his information for basing the Stokes-D'Urberville line in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles". The wealthy family occupying the D'Urberville estates had no actual right to them, and John Derbeyfield,"rickety legged, debased," was the true lineal descendant of a great line. The parson who discovered the information about the Derbeyfield family asked John to throw up his chin a moment, while he studied his profile.

"Yes,that's the D'Urberville nose and chin-a little debased. Your ancestor was one of the twelve Knights who assisted the Lord of Estramarilla in Normandy in his conquest of Glamorganshire.Branches of your family held manors over all this part of England. In the reign of King John, one of them was rich enough to give a manor to the Knights Hospitallers,

---

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.123.

and in Charles the Second's reign you were made Knights of the Royal Oak for your loyalty....If Knighthood were hereditary, like a baronetcy....you would be Sir John now." 1/

To this had Sir John descended, a large family of children with a decrept old horse their sole means of support ! The Durbeyfield family was placed in the same country setting as that in which Hardy lived, in a valley of little dairies. Talbothays where Hardy's father's farm was situated, and Tess's unspoiled childhood was spent, was near the village of Marnhull. The valley of the Froom served as her meeting-place with Angel Clare, and her happy summer was spent there. At the Wool manor-house, Tess's miserable past is exposed, and she is found by Clare in the fashionable resort of Bournemouth. Toward the end, Tess falls asleep on one of the historic druid stones at Stonehenge.

Now that Hardy had his plans worked out, he started to write his story, and sent part of it to the magazine,"Murrays." To his surprise, it was returned, and, upon sending it to MacMillan in 1889, the manuscript was again returned. The story was thought to be too immoral for the Victorian reader. Hardy revised it to have Tess go through a mock marriage with Alec D'Urberville, and satisfied the Mrs. Grundies of the period. Hardy was not unaware of the ridiculousness of the

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, pp.2-3.

revision, and also one he made later, where Tess went to live with Alec. Hardy had Alec live in another apartment in the same dwelling occasionally, and required Tess to take the first floor apartment, as "Miss D'Urberville."

What Hardy thought as he changed these passages for publication can be imagined; his concession to the genteel ideals of the period convinced him of the foolish prudery of the literary tradition. In order to meet public approval about Tess's end, Hardy thought that he made himself clear that he was not expressing his own ideas when he put quotation marks around "Justice" and in parenthesis to explain that Aeschylus thought thus, in the following phrase :

"'Justice' was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess." 1/

Hardy meant the story to be an indictment of society "that could condemn a woman of Tess's integrity and courage and humility." 2/

A new publishing firm,Osgood,McIlvaine and Company published "Tess" in November, 1891. The readers were not concerned with the problems caused by the decline of an aristocratic line, or the unfairness in allowing a member of the aristocratic class to bring about the ruin of " a pure woman," as they were about the Aeschylean phrase used

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p.457.

2/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.129.

by Hardy. All the troubles endured by Tess faded into insignificance over the controversy about Hardy's intention and the underlying significance. Three printings sold out immediately. The reviewers were harsh. The "Quarterly Review" said : "Mr. Hardy has told an extremely disagreeable story in an extremely disagreeable manner." 1/ Henry James said Tess was vile,but Edmund Gosse interjected a word of praise: "Your book is simply magnificent," he said.

Tess's position in society reaches down to the dairymaid and rustic level. Her dialect places her among the rustics, her occupation among those who work for a living among the dairies. Dialect was spoken in the home: " Mrs. Durbeyfield still habitually spoke the dialect; her daughter, who had passed the Sixth Standard in the National School, under a London-trained mistress, spoke two languages; the dialect at home, more or less; ordinary English abroad and to persons of Quality. " 2/

Mrs. Durbeyfield encouraged Tess to make herself known to their rich "Kin" and said," if you claimed kin with the lady, she'd put 'ee in the way of marrying a gentleman." 3/

Hardy injects the thought that although the Stokes-D'Urberville family had no right to the name, yet" This family formed a very good stock whereon to regraft a name which sadly wanted such renovation." 4/

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.130.
2/ Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p.18.
3/ Idem, p.29.
4/ Idem, p.39.

By going to the house of D'Urberville, Tess was expected to "be made a lady of." Tess indignantly refutes this idea to Angel, for she said " I am only a peasant by position, not by nature," 1/

Angel returns: " I cannot help associating your decline as a family with this other fact- of your want of firmness. Decrepit families imply decrepit wills, decrepit conduct.... Here was I thinking of you as a new-sprung child of Nature, there were you, the exhausted seed of an effete aristocracy! "

Later Angel says : " I thought....that by giving up all ambition to win a wife with social standing, with fortune, with knowledge of the world, I should secure rustic innocence as surely as I should secure pink cheeks." 2/

The decline of the mighty and the terrible results were suggested in the permanent inscription upon the headstone of John Durbeyfield:

" In memory of John Durbeyfield, rightly D'Urberville, of the once Powerful Family of that Name, and Direct Descendant through an Illustrious Line from Sir Bryan D'Urberville, one of the Knights of the Conqueror. Died March 10th,18--.

"How are the Mighty Fallen." 3/

Charles Lamb in Rosamond Gray "had a hero named ' Allan Clare.' " There is a close resemblance between "Angel Clare"

1/ Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p.264.
2/ Idem, P.270.
3/ Idem, p.428.

and "Allan Clare." Hardy once told Sir Sydney Cockerell [1] tha Angel Clare was partly drawn from Charles Moule, the sixth son of the Reverend Henry Moule, Vicar of Fordington. Charles became president of Corpus Christi College,Cambridge. But Hardy's Clare could not go to Cambridge because his studies had undermined his religious faith. Angel Clare might be Lamb's "Allan Clare", since Angel went to Brazil and Allan became a wanderer.

Thus the seduction of Tess, her unhappy life and ending bear out a theme not found in any of Hardy's previous novels: moral indignation at social injustice.[2] It was moral bravery that Hardy dared public comdemnation and expressed his admiration openly for Tess. Tess's cry at the entrance to the tombs of the D'Urbervilles: "Why am I on the wrong side of this door ?" is an echo of Hardy's own thought, why was he "the exhausted seed of an effete aristocracy ?" Hardy's desire for children, which he never had,[3] his sensitiveness to social levels combined to make him conscious of his position at the end of his line. Carl Weber said,in Hardy of Wessex, page 158 : "His lowly origin on the edge of Egdon Heath, the thatched cottage in which his parents continued to reside for many years after his marriage, his lack of a university degree, all served as reminders of the difference in social station of which he was as conscious as she was(Mrs. Hardy)."

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.119.
2/ Idem, p.132
3/ Hardy's Notebook, August 13,1877.

The next novel was the result of Hardy's hope not to offend anyone. Since he had admittedly put his best into Tess, he reached back into his past and drew out an idea he had when he was a young man. "The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved" is similar to Shelleyan ideas of the flickering virtues of beauty. A young man pursues his love in various forms, beginning with the young girl Avice and shifting to Avice's daughter, thence to her granddaughter.

In "The Well-Beloved" there was little or no talk of class distinction. Avice's mother chides her for kissing Pierston," a young man from London and foreign cities, used to the strictest company manners, and ladies who almost think it vulgar to smile broad." 1/

Pierston's father was called "an inartistic man of trade" (p.8) from whom Pierston, however, accepted an allowance. Miss Bencomb, the young lady whom Pierston met on the beach vowed she'd "even work for a living !"(p.36) Pierston says for her sake he'll try to be a Royal Academician(p.46) if she will be his wife.

But there was "no social reason"(p.71) against the step of marriage with Marcia, nor with any of Pierston's other loves. "The Well-Beloved" is a story of one class of human beings, and there is no problem resulting from class barriers. The story ran as a serial in the "News" from October,1892, to December, 1892.

1/ Thomas Hardy, The Well-Beloved, p.7.

The preceding year (1891) another group of short stories appeared, "A Group of Noble Dames." The method of narration imitates that of the Decameron. The preface suggests that Hardy would have us believe the tales to be founded on the history of Dorset families. 1/ They are amazing adventures of noble dames, and are entirely unreal and stilted. Another group of stories "Life's Little Ironies"(1894) is written with far more attention to the realism of life, but they are improbable and unpleasant. The best of these tales is "A Few Crusted Characters". Some scattered short stories were printed in a volume in 1913, called "A Changed Man and Other Tales." This collection completed Hardy's Short Stories and contains scraps of description and parts of legends some of which were included in his novels. Hardy's short stories are often gripping, but they do not have the full development and realistic qualities of his novels.

Hardy now prepared himself to write what was to be his last novel. He remembered stories his grandmother told him, and he decided to visit the part of the country she lived in as a girl-Great Fawley. The name of the place was the name he gave his lad.

In "Jude the Obscure", Hardy was tackling still another

1/ W.R. Rutland, Thomas Hardy, p.219.

problem. He was turning from the irony of attempting any sort of social distinction and the dire results of those who disregarded their own social standing, to another kind of aristocracy. In "Jude", Hardy was considering the aristocracy of the mind. He had brought out in previous novels his opinions of worldly ambitions and their usual unhappy ends, and now he undertook the sad attempt of those handicapped by economic conditions and by nature to attain their intellectual ambitions.

He chose as his central character a lad born in poverty but having a burning desire to study and through study gain a distinction which would place him among his scholarly peers. As a contrast to Jude Fawley, he chose a schoolmaster,poor, but also ambitious,who would have a better chance to achieve his intellectual aims than Jude. As a symbol for erudition, Hardy chose the spires of Christminster,akin to Oxford, which shone as a beacon, urging Jude onward,beckoning him to come, and cruelly mocking him when he reached his goal.

Hardy describes the economic struggles of Jude whom he brings safely through an apprenticeship in architecture. Jude was given as an obstacle,the girl Arabella. She symbolically first attracted Jude's attention by tossing portions of a pig at him as she cleaned it. She followed up this by many meetings with him and finally trapped him into an unsuitable marriage. Tiring of him, she agreed to part with him, and with this obstacle finally removed from his path, Jude found himself in Christminster. His first effort was to make money to pay for his education,and he turned to his profession of architect. In

fact, when his eyes fell upon the buildings of the college and he compared the architecture to the half-finished work in the stone-yard, there fell upon him " a true illumination, that here in the stone-yard was a centre of effort as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study within the noblest of colleges." 1/

But Jude remembered the advice given to him by schoolmaster Phillotson, as the latter was leaving Marygreen to seek further education in Christminster:

" You know what a university is, and a university degree? It is the necessary hall-mark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching. My scheme,or dream, is to be a university graduate, and then to be ordained. By going to Christminster, or near it, I shall be at headquarters, and....I consider that being on the spot will afford me a better chance of carrying it out than I should have elsewhere." 2/

Jude had received the idea that the very sons of washerwomen knew Greek and Latin in Christminster,for the quack-doctor,Vilbert, had told him so when he was a boy. He knew that if that were so, he would stand a chance of getting on with his education.

Jude's first intimation that an education was not so easy to get was on the first day he went to seek for work in Christminster.

1/ Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure, p.96.

2/ Idem, p.4.

".... he found that the colleges had treacherously changed their sympathetic countenances: some were stern: some had put on the look of family vaults above ground; something barbaric loomed in the masonries of all. The spirits of the great men had disappeared." 1/

His second intimation came that all was not well, when he tried to look up Phillotson, whom he thought by this time to be a parson. Jude found that Phillotson had failed in this aspiration, and was a village schoolmaster in Kumsdon.2/ Jude thought, "how could he succeed in an enterprise wherein the great Phillotson had failed ?" 3/

Jude began to see that "only a wall divided him from those happy young contemporaries of his with whom he shared a common mental life : men who had nothing to do from morning till night but to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. Only a wall- but what a wall !" 4/

Jude's desire to penetrate that wall made him redouble his efforts to get money:"for wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it." 5/ Jude realized the encumbrance marriage had been to him, and regretted the economic strain it now put upon him, since he had spent his poor

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure, p.95.
2/ Idem, p.115.
3/ Idem
4/ Idem, p.98.
5/ Idem, pp.99-100.

earnings on a house and furniture which Arabella now had. Nature was a hussy that forced Jude to this pass; and Nature was responsible later for Phillotson's abandoning all hope for a curateship, when "he was now bent on making and saving money for a practical purpose- that of keeping a wife." 1/

The second obstacle put in Jude's way by Nature was his entanglement with his cousin, Sue Bridehead. Sue realized what had happened when she left her husband, Phillotson, and returned to Jude. She asked :

"Are you giving up your Cathedral work here ? "

"Yes. Strictly, I might have been made to finish out the week. But I pleaded urgency, and I was let off. I would have deserted any day at your command, dear Sue. I have deserted more than that for you !"

"I fear I am doing you a lot of harm. Ruining your prospects of the Church; ruining your progress in your trade; everything !"

"The Church is no more to me.....My point of bliss is not upward, but here !"

"Oh, I seem so bad-upsetting men's courses like this !"2/

Sue, the obstacle in Jude's life which permanently deterred Jude from a college education, is the final cause for Phillotson's failure in life. He said:

1/ Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure, p.187.

2/ Idem, p.281.

" I have hopelessly ruined my prospects because of my decision as to what was best for us....I see only dire poverty ahead from my feet to the grave, for I can be accepted as teacher no more. I shall probably have enough to do to make both ends meet during the remainder of my life, now my occupation is gone." 1/

Although Jude is now reduced to doing the same thing- to making ends meet that he and Sue, and later,Father Time and the other children, might live, to demonstrate the complete severance between Jude and the Church, Hardy has Jude take a job fixing the tablet bearing the Ten Commandments in a church. Sue endeavors to help him, but when the cleaning woman saw her, knowing something of Sue's history, she complained to other ladies of the church. She said : "A strange pair to be painting the Two Tables ! I wonder Biles and Willis could think of such a thing as hiring those !" 2/

The church-warden told a tale of a godless group of men who worked on the Commandments, repairing them, and the next morning at church all the Commandments had the "nots" left out.

Jude and Sue see the impracticability of their position, and when the contractor,Willis, asks them to leave, they do so.

In spite of all their troubles, Sue sees that Jude still cares for Christminster. It is an undying fire in him which will never be quenched.

1/ Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure, p.299.

2/ Idem, p.356.

"Why should you care so much for Christminster ?" She said, pensively. "Christminster cares nothing for you, poor dear !"

"Well, I do; I can't help it. I love the place- although I know how it hates all men like me- the so-called self-taught- how it scorns our labored acquisition, when it should be the first to respect them; how it sneers at our false quantities and mispronunciations, when it should say, I see you want help, my poor friend !.....Nevertheless, it is the center of the universe to me, because of my early dream : and nothing can alter it. Perhaps it will soon wake up, and be generous. I pray so !" 1/

These are the problems of those who hunger and thirst after knowledge; for they shall not be filled, according to Hardy's Jude. And who or what's to blame ? Sue said she was not, altogether. Phillotson asks Sue if he were to blame for their unhappiness. She answered :

"No-I don't know ! The universe, I suppose-things in general, because they are so horrid and cruel !" 2/

The main thread of Hardy's theme-the overwhelming obstacles that stand in the way of a mortal handicapped by economic necessity and frustrated by Nature's demands- was lost in the chorus of disapproval from reviewers and the genteel public. The clergy and the genteel world tore their

---

1/ Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure, p.379.
2/ Idem, p.262.

outraged feelings to tatters. In America, the New York "World" hysterically objected (1895). The Victorian morals had been tremendously offended, not because a poor boy had tried to get an education and had failed, but because the boy had lived openly with a girl, after seducing another girl who tricked him into marriage. Even the sordid murders of Jude's and Sue's children by Father Time and his pathetic suicide, paled into insignificance beside the fact of such blatant immorality.

It can easily be seen what the results were when "Jude the Obscure" was launched in December, 1895. The Victorian era was drawing to a close. Soon a new type of literature would come into being along with changes in democratic ideals. Before the old order could give way to a new, it must wreak its displeasure on something which offended its tradition. The "something" was Hardy's "Jude the Obscure". It had upset the normal reaction and conventional code of the Victorian world. Hardy's hope that he could influence the world's way of thinking and doing, perished. "The only effect that I could discover,"he remarked,[1/] "was its effect on myself-the experience completely curing me of further interest in novel-writing."

In this novel, with Hardy turning away from the frustration of social hopes in previous novels, to the frustration of intellectual and spiritual desires in Jude, Hardy

---

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.152.

had completed the cycle of his own intellectual life. He laid down the pen with which he had written so much about life in his stories, and for the remainder of his years, was content to find consolation and artistic achievement in poetry.

CONCLUSION

In bowing to the demands of the various editors to revise parts of his too-daring stories, Hardy realized that the Victorian tradition was still too strong for him to defy. His reputation as novelist was firm, but his decision to write no more novels was due to his conviction that the public did not want the truth about life but that they still wanted their pills sugar-coated.

At a luncheon in London Hardy was seated by the novelist, Edith Wharton, who asked him if it were true that the Editor of "Harper's" had insisted on his transforming the illegitimate children of Jude and Sue into adopted orphans. Hardy said yes, but that he was not surprised, because a Scottish editor obliged him to have his hero and heroine go for a walk on a week-day instead of Sunday, as he had written the tale.[1/]

Rumour had been rife about Hardy's own married life, and speculations that his domestic harmony may not have been any better than that portrayed in "Jude" were openly discussed. Through Hardy's poems about his first wife which were published after 1913, the world learned something of his feeling for her.

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.149.

It has been mentioned that Elfride in "A Pair of Blue Eyes" was based on Miss Emma Gifford,whom Hardy married. The young architect, Stephen Smith, did not ride horseback as Elfride did; neither did Hardy, who walked along the Dover Cliffs while Miss Gifford rode. Mr. Smith was Elfride's social inferior, and Hardy was Miss Gifford's, according to later remarks she made in life. Miss Gifford could not forget that her father was a solicitor, that her uncle was a canon of Worcester Cathedral and Archdeacon of London, that her brother-in-law was a rector.[1/]

Hardy's origin in a thatched cottage and knowledge of the family's decline from aristocratic stock,served from earliest childhood to develop an inferiority complex. His marriage to a woman who considered herself his social superior, increased this feeling. When he began to gain fame for himself and the Hardys were entertained socially by prominent society people, Hardy found little satisfaction. His wife's evident enjoyment of social functions was not paralleled by his. Mrs. Hardy had the belief that she could write, and this, coupled with their different views about the Church, caused a drifting apart. Mrs. Hardy felt that she could criticise Hardy's works, and she was continually urging Hardy to have stronger religious beliefs and to avoid expressing his fatalistic views in his stories.

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.158.

Hardy's own humility gave Mrs. Hardy an exaggerated idea of her powers.[1] She often gave visitors the impression that she helped Mr. Hardy to write his stories. She held strong opinions and expressed them. Her orthodox religious views caused much unhappiness when Hardy dared oppose them. T.P. O'Connor reported her words to him after he had entertained them at dinner: "You know, he's very vain and very selfish. And these women that he meets in London society only increase these things. They are poison; I am the antidote." [2] To O'Connor her whole bitter purpose was to belittle her husband.

However, the Hardys remained together, bicycling and touring England. She, because of her decisive and vigorous disposition, was the means for helping him on various occasions. Once she pretended to faint in order to allow him admittance to an old manor house Hardy wished to inspect. Upon Mrs. Hardy's death in 1912, Hardy forgot the coldness, the social snobbery, the religious antagonism, and she became the girl Emma he had known long ago, and their love was renewed after death. Although Hardy married again, his heart was buried in the grave of his first wife in the church at Stinsford, while his body was buried in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey. John Macy wrote:[3] "On the day of Hardy's death, the world knew, that is, everybody but the Nobel Prize

---

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.161.
2/ Idem, p.164.
3/ Idem, p.227

Committee knew, that the greatest man of letters in the world had gone and that there was no one quite clearly second to step into his place." Thomas Hardy died on January 11,1928, in the house he had built at Max Gate forty-five years earlier.

Since Hardy's novels were written during the lifetime of his first wife, we may assume that it was her influence that helped to affect his perspective on social status and upon marriage. His first novels dealt with the themes of the troubles arising from unequal love affairs and marriage. "The Poor Man and the Lady",that missing manuscript, had Miss Allamont's ill-fated love for Strong, the poor man, result in her death, and had her father, the Honorable Fay Allamont, break through class prejudices and send for Strong in an effort to save her life.

In "Desperate Remedies" the ill-adjusted lovers are Edward Springrove and Cytherea Graye, and they were salvaged from "The Poor Man and the Lady". In "A Pair of Blue Eyes" Elfride's affair with the widow Jethway's son, and then with architect Stephen Smith, suggest the impossibility of finding happiness with either Henry Knight or Lord Luxellian.

In "Far from the Madding Crowd" the headstrong Bathsheba complicates her love affair with the shepherd Oak by an affair with the soldier Troy and a flirtation with farmer Boldwood. Boldwood is in Bathsheba's social world, but Hardy has a happy ending in allowing the finer qualities

of the shepherd to be recognized.

"Under the Greenwood Tree", with its pictures of rural life, allows Fancy to be happy with Dick Dewey, although she had been educated beyond him and was eligible to a higher rank of society.

"The Hand of Ethelberta" is a hopeless mixing of the classes of society, with Ethelberta attempting to pose as a society woman and her family acting as her servants. Her father, serving her as the butler of her host, does not present a pretty scene, and the story of an adventuress in drawing-room scenes is not a picture Hardy could draw well.

The yearning to be in another class of society is best illustrated, perhaps, by "The Return of the Native". Eustacia, feeling superior to Clym Wildeve, nevertheless marries him, because she hopes he will take her away to a life in Paris. The reddleman Venn is socially inferior to Thomasin, but their marriage is allowed to turn out happily in contrast to Eustacia's and Clym's unhappy one.

"An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress" is a story of rigid class distinction between Miss Allenville and Egbert. Their unhappy marriage and Geraldine's death is the result when class barriers are broken down, according to Hardy's theme.

"The Trumpet-Major" has the widow Garland superior to Miller Loveday. Class distinction is not emphasized much here, and their marriage is congenial.

"A Laodicean" brings the barriers of class into prominence once more. The de Stancys represent the impregnable position of society and the theme of the architect's experiences and struggles as he wanders from country to country is again described.

"Two on a Tower", the astronomical story, told of the great lady Viviette who stooped to an affair with the poor young astronomer.

"The Mayor of Casterbridge" places a poor young man in a position of importance, whereupon he is unwilling or unable to accept in the same social position the wife whom he had sold to a sailor.

The novels up to this point "had expressed with ever-increasing frankness Hardy's revolt against the fundamental conditions of existence in a badly constituted world." 1/ "The Mayor of Casterbridge" considered the defects in human nature and their effect upon the world. Now with "The Woodlanders" Hardy questioned how far the organization of society itself is responsible for man's unhappiness. 2/

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.109.

2/ Idem, p.109.

The characters in this novel are the first of Hardy's creations to blame neither God nor themselves but human conventions.[1] George Melbury urges marriage to Dr. Fitzpiers for his daughter Grace. In doing so, he ruins her chances for happiness with one of her own social status, Giles Winterborne. The death of Giles is an outcome of the misalliance.

Hardy's masterpiece "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" provides Hardy with material for a variation of the theme of social aspirations. Weber said,[2] " The more Hardy himself meditated on the views of the Church, the more he was impressed by the fact that ecclesiastical dogma seemed in complete disagreement with the laws of nature which he had been observing for nearly fifty years." He concluded that an act which socially might be a great tragedy could be in nature not at all alarming.

The social tragedy committed by Tess in having a baby out of wedlock was the first misfortune which sprung the final tragedy of her end on the gallows. Had Tess been properly married according to society's convention, there would have been no tragedy. The fact that Alec felt her beneath him socially was the cause of her seduction ; when he wanted to rectify this later and marry her, Tess

---

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.110

2/ Idem, p.120.

was already married to Angel Clare. To meet the demands of the publishers who asked Hardy to change the facts of Tess's seduction, Hardy made Tess go through a mock marriage to Alec. The social tragedy remained the same, and Tess's baby was still illegitimate.

"Jude the Obscure" was Tess turned about. This time, the main character who broke social laws was the boy, Jude Fawley. The tragedy in his life was not so much that he married Arabella, lived openly with Sue, and had his three illegitimate children killed by Arabella's son,"Father Time", but that he failed to attain his ambition for an education in Christminster. In this story, social barriers reached out a long hand and kept Jude from entering the sacred walls surrounding the college.

The entire roster of Hardy's works deals with society: society in its artificial sense in his earlier novels; society in its deeper cultural sense in his middle and later novels; and in Tess and Jude, society in the deepest sense which is governed by restrictions upon the basic human nature in each one of us. In the last novel, "Jude the Obscure", the external aristocracy has been replaced by the internal aristocracy of the mind, and here, too, Hardy parallels the failures to cross social barriers with the failure to cross intellectual ones.

Hardy could not be called a thorough pessimist. He was melancholy, but he was gifted with a capacity for laughter, too. This was demonstrated in the rustic characters which he wove into his stories, and their delightful country dialect. Hardy preferred to call his books tragic rather than pessimistic. His own beliefs, which concerned themselves with the futility of the battle against the conventional and prescribed, did not wholly owe their origin to his humble birth. Nature itself was governed by laws of chance, and these same laws were applied to human existence. The chance that blows the seedling to root beside a rock is the same one that takes an identical seedling to the fertile field.

What this chance is, Hardy did not pretend to know. For want of a better word, he used Schopenhauer's "Immutable Will", and referred to it as the colossal "Prince of Darkness" or an all-powerful urge behind the Universe. It was chance that formed the classes and brought more unhappiness to mankind. It was chance that formed the basis of social order and distinction and caused the economic problems which beset men wherever they may be.

Hardy's own economic problems were solved and the pressure of living lightened by the sale of these stories about life. Although he need never have written another word for the rest of his life, his desire for artistic expression brought about such massive works as "The Dynasts" as well as many

minor poems. The acclaim from the public was signalized by the Order of Merit from the King on July 19, 1910.

The honors hoped for by the young Hardy came fast late in life. He was made Doctor of Laws by the University of Aberdeen in 1905; Doctor of Letters by Cambridge in 1913. When he went to receive the latter degree, Hardy made the mistake of appearing in an LL.D. gown. Doubtless the chagrin he felt did not weigh upon him at this time so heavily as it might have done thirty years before. In the same year (1913), again in Cambridge, he was elected an Honorary Fellow of Magdalene College. This time Hardy wore a surplice with a scarlet gown over it,[1/] which was not the appropriate academic robe. Whether Hardy knew this or not is unknown, for no comment was made. Whatever may have been the reason, it must have satisfied those earlier longings for public approval and distinction, which were echoed in Jude's thoughts as he stood with Sue and their children in the rain at Christminster, watching the brilliant procession of notables slowly marching through the college gates.

Oxford decided to forget their scruples against "Jude the Obscure", and gave Hardy a D.Litt. degree in 1920, and later, he was elected an Honorary Fellow of Queen's College. St. Andrew's University in Scotland voted Hardy an LL.D. in 1922. So the degrees piled up and Hardy through writing of

---

1/ Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p.225.

frustrated hopes became an eminent literary figure and first novelist of England in the period.

When Thomas Hardy died on January 11, 1928, his body was placed among England's greatest in Westminster Abbey. Since it was felt that his heart belonged to Wessex, it was laid in the grave of his first wife at the Stinsford church. With great accomplishment and highest achievement, this writer of stories about social inequality and hopeless ambition,died. His message still lives on in the world and his quest for the answer to the riddle will go on.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bhattacharya — Hindu Castes and Sects. Thacker, Spink and Company, 1896.

Brennecke, Ernest, Jr. — Thomas Hardy's Universe. Small, Maynard, and Company, 1924.

Duffin, H.C. — Thomas Hardy. Manchester: University Press, Longmans, Green and Company, 1916.

Fairholme, Edward G. and Pain, Wellesley — A Century of Work for Animals: Ode by Thomas Hardy. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1924.

Hardy, Florence Emily — The Early Life of Thomas Hardy. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1928.

_____ — The Later Years of Thomas Hardy. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1930.

Holland, Clive — Thomas Hardy, O.M., Herbert Jenkins, Limited, St. James', London, S.W., 1933.

Johnson, Lionel — The Art of Thomas Hardy. London: Mathews and Lane, 1894.

Rutland, W.R. — Thomas Hardy. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938.

Santayana, George — The Genteel Tradition at Bay. New York: Scribner's, 1931.

Weber, Carl J. — Hardy of Wessex. New York: Columbia University Press, 1940.

Thomas Hardy's Novels

Publisher, Harper and Brothers, New York.

A Changed Man and Other Tales .....1913.

Desperate Remedies.....1889

Far from the Madding Crowd.....1895

Fellow-Townsmen 1895

BIBLIOGRAPHY(continued)

Thomas Hardy's Novels (continued)

Publisher,Harper and Brothers, New York

A Group of Noble Dames 1896

The Hand of Ethelberta 1895

Jude the Obscure..... 1896

A Laodicean..... 1896

Life's Little Ironies..... 1896

The Mayor of Casterbridge..... 1895

A Pair of Blue Eyes..... 1895

The Return of the Native..... 1895

Tess of the D'Urbervilles..... 1896

The Trumpet-Major..... 1895

Two on a Tower..... 1895

Under the Greenwood Tree..... 1896

The Well-Beloved..... 1896

Wessex Tales 1896

The Woodlanders..... 1896

Note: The date identifies the edition.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
1 1719 02488 5602